裏恋。

ウラミコイ、コイ、ウラミコイ。

Uramikoi,Koi,Uramikoi.

秋タカ

恨み来、恋、恨み恋。

恨み来、恋、恨み恋。

Uramikoi,Koi,Uramikoi.

秋タカ

Uramikoi, Koi, Uramikoi.

CHAPTER 1: THE HATEFUL CAT
003

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087

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143

...I SEE.

ONCE THE CAT HAD REALIZED THAT IT HAD BEEN DECEIVED, IT BEGAN TO HOLD A GREAT HATRED FOR THE RAT.

LONG AGO, THE RAT DECEIVED THE CAT FOR ITS OWN GAIN.

EVEN UNTIL THIS VERY DAY.

AND FOR THAT REASON, CATS HAVE ALWAYS CHASED AFTER RATS,

SO YOU'RE... THE HATEFUL CAT.

CHAPTER 1: THE HATEFUL CAT

恨み来、恋、恨み恋。

ウラミコイ、コイ、ウラミコイ。

KYOICHI NEKUNI

CURIOSITY IS A TROUBLESOME THING.

AND MEETING AN UNEXPECTED BETRAYAL AT THE HANDS OF IT IS NOT UNCOMMON.

.....

ONCE IT BUBBLES TO THE SURFACE, IT TAKES OVER YOU LIKE A SWARM OF HOUSE MICE.

10th

EXTREMELY FOOLISH AND-

DON'T PRESS THE BUTTON. NO MATTER WHAT

DEATH

DON'T PRESS THE BUTTON. NO MATTER WHAT

COMPLETELY LACKING SELF-CONTROL AND SHOWING INTEREST IN SUCH OBVIOUS BAIT IS

FOR SUCH REASONS, CURIOSITY MUST BE HELD AT A TIGHT REIN.

ゴゴゴゴゴゴゴ

ゴゴゴゴゴ

SEE, DIDN'T I TELL YOU?

!!

STUPID! STUUUPID!

WHY WOULD YOU DO THAT!?

STUUUPID! IDIOT!

AHA HAHA!

It's so easy!

I TOLD YOU MOUSEY'D FALL FOR IT!

KAPPA: TAROMARU KAWARASHI

ZASHIKI-WARASHI: HANA ZAWARASHI

He's Mad!

A ha ha ha ha!

DAMN YOKAI BRATS!!

YOU AGAIN... YOU...

...TAROMARU, HANA...

I'M NOT SO STUPID THAT I'D FALL FOR THE SAME TRAP TWI...

DO NOT PRESS

ぽち

AGAIN...!? THEY MIGHT BE YOKAI, BUT THEY'RE JUST KIDS.

!

WHA—

ゴゴゴ

FALLIN'... FOR A TRAP LIKE THIS AGAIN...

THAT'S HUGE!!!

STOP STOP STOP!

THAT'S GOING WAY TOO...

ドサ

AYAKA...!

...SHEESH.

WHAT TH' HELL ARE YA DOIN'!?

KYOICHI-SAN, WHY CAN'T YA THINK ABOUT TH' ONES DOIN' THE PROTECTIN' FOR ONCE?

AYAKA USHIGURA

AH!

BUT ENOUGH ABOUT THAT, HOW ABOUT YOU LET TAROMARU DOWN?

GEEZ, WITH THAT ATTITUDE, YER GONNA HURT YERSELF ONE DAY.

Wow, not sorry at all.

WELL... UM, AS LONG AS IT'S ALL FUN AND GAMES, I THOUGHT IT'D BE ALRIGHT.

レ〜ス〜…

...AT LEAST DON'T KILL ANYONE?

YA CAN HAVE FUN WHEN YER PLAYIN', BUT AT LEAST DON'T KILL ANYONE.

DON'T DO ANYTHIN' CRAZY ANYMORE, YA HEAR?

WHO'S A MOMMY AND WHO'S A DADDY AND WHO'S LIKE A MARRIED COUPLE!!?

Say it one more time so I can hear ya!

DID THEY ACTUALLY SAY "DADDY?"

WHO...!

YEAH!

YOU'RE ALWAYS SCOLDING US LIKE A MOMMY, COWGIRL.

THEN SOMETHING'S GOING ON, RIGHT?

WHAT IS IT? IF YOU CAME TO SEE ME ON A DAY OFF IN YOUR FORMAL CLOTHES,

DISMISSED.

THE HATEFUL CAT,

YOUR NATURAL ENEMY, KYOICHI-SAN.

...YES. WE HAVE INFORMATION FROM THE DOG CLAN

THAT A YOKAI WAS SPOTTED ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF TWELVE TOWN.

HM? IS SOMETHIN' THE MATTER?

NO... GO ON.

SIDGH!

...ACTJALLY, NOT JUST THE TOWN OUTSKIRTS, IT'S ALREADY IN—

!

BUT YA DON'T NEED TO WORRY.

TWELVE TOWN HAS A BARRIER THAT REPELS INTRUDING YOKAI,

AND IT HAS A SEAL OF APPROVAL FROM THE TORIDERA FAMILY, WHO OVERSEES IT.

...A SEAL OF APPROVAL? SHE'S SPOUTING NONSENSE AG...

AINGH!

!?

IT... IT'S ALRIGHT...

And what do you mean "your?"

'EY! YA BRATS!! WHA'DYA THINK YER DOIN' TO MY KYOICHI-SAN!?

おぶ

YUP.

I'M GOIN' OUT TO THE TOWN OUTSKIRTS FOR OGRE TERMINATION.

OH,

SO YOU'RE DRESSED LIKE THAT TO GO OUT TO WORK IN THE FIELD, AND NOT TO BE MY BODY-GUARD, THEN.

I THINK... BUT...

SO I'LL BE GOING OUT WITH SANA-CHAN FROM THE DOG CLAN FOR... A FEW DAYS?

THEY SHOULD JUST GET LAST NAMES AND LIVE INSIDE THE TOWN LIKE TAROMARU AND THE OTHERS.

THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE. THEY JUST CLAIM THEY CAN'T COEXIST, AND SOME EVEN LIKE EATING HJMANS...

OH, UM... THEY'RE HOSTILE YOKAI THAT'RE AFTER THIS TOWN... RIGHT?

UM...

SO DON'T PUT ON A TOUGH FRONT...!

IF... IF YOU'RE IN A BIND, I'LL COME FLYIN' TO YA RIGHT AWAY...!

YES, MA'AM.

OKAY, OKAY.

...WAS THAT GOOD ENOUGH FOR YOU,

HATEFUL CAT?

YES.
ALL IS
WELL.

...THAT'S
RIGHT.

I'M ALIVE
BECAUSE YOU
LET ME LIVE,

HATEFUL
CAT.

YOU CAME
CLOSE, BUT HAD
YOU SPOKEN
ABOUT ME JUST
A LITTLE
MORE,

I WOULD HAVE
HAD YOUR
HEAD OFF IN
AN INSTANT.

THAT IS CORRECT. DO NOT FORGET THA...

!?

WH-WHY ARE YOU COMING THIS WAY!?

N-NO! DON'T COME OVER HERE! WAH!

WAH! WAH!

OH... THERE'S NOBODY HERE...

AS IF!

DID YOU THINK I'D FALL FOR THAT!?

WAH!

NO... STO...

UH... UM...

I... I HATE... YOU...

YOU...

I DON'T LIKE THAT...

I... I... SAID,

I HAVE A LOT I WANT TO SAY TO YOU, BUT FIRST...

"HATEFUL CAT" IS A MOUTHFUL, SO I'M JUST GONNA CALL YOU NATSUHO.

HATEFUL CAT:
NATSUHO NEKOGAZAKI

恨み来、恋、恨み恋。 1

I WON'T DO THAT... ANYMORE...

I... I WON'T...

OW! THAT HURTS!

I... I REFUSE...

WHY SHOULD I... LISTEN TO WHAT YOU...

BUT THIS REALLY HURTS, SO KNOCK IT OFF! SERIOUSLY!

ANYWAY, I DON'T CARE IF YOU THREATEN ME,

You're wasting food!

OH, SHE'S SERIOUSLY CRYING.

SO... LET ME PUT THAT OVER ME...

I WON'T... DO THAT ANYMORE...

I... I'M IMPRESSED THAT YOU WERE ABLE TO SEE THROUGH MY DISGUISE...

...WHO WOULDN'T HAVE?

Here

THIS WAS SUPPOSED TO BE OVER QUICKLY...

I HATE YOU...

SO... YOU CAN'T DO THINGS LIKE THIS WHERE WE CAN BE SEEN BY A LOT OF PEOPLE...!

AND ONE MORE THING... I GET ANXIOUS AROUND STRANGERS...!

YOU'RE A LOT BOLDER WHEN YOU'RE A CAT.

SO YOU'RE THE HATEFUL CAT.

I SEE...

THERE ISN'T A PERSON IN THIS TOWN WHO *WOULDN'T* KNOW.

IT COMES UP IN THE FOLK TALE OF HOW TWELVE TOWN WAS FORMED, DOESN'T IT?

...SO YOU KNOW.

LONG AGO, THERE WAS FRUITLESS, BUT VAST, LAND.

THAT LAND WAS TOO GREAT EVEN FOR THE GOD OF THE LAND TO TAKE CARE OF,

SO HE DECIDED TO CHOOSE TWELVE OF THE FAMILIES BEARING A NAMES OF ANIMALS TO TAKE TURNS RULING OVER THE LAND.

THE SELECTION METHOD WAS BY THE ORDER IN WHICH THEY MADE AN AUDIENCE WITH THE GOD OF THE LAND.

THE FIRST TO ARRIVE WAS THE RAT, WHO RODE ON THE BACK OF THE OX.

AFTER THE RAT CAME THE OX, AND THEN THE TIGER, RABBIT, DRAGON, SNAKE, HORSE, SHEEP, MONKEY, ROOSTER, DOG, AND FINALLY, THE PIG.

AND THUS THE TWELVE CLANS WERE CHOSEN, BUT THE CAT HAD BEEN DECEIVED BY THE RAT AND ARRIVED ON THE WRONG DATE.

THE CAT REALIZED THAT IT HAD BEEN DECEIVED AND LOST ITSELF IN RAGE,

AND THE GOD OF THE LAND BECAME FURIOUS AND EXILED THE CAT FROM THE LAND.

EVENTUALLY BECOMING A YOKAI.

AND THE CAT BECAME DEFILED BY THE HATRED IT BORE.

THUS, THE CAT WITHDREW TO THE MOUNTAINS, CEASELESSLY HATING THE RAT CLAN.

AND MY HATRED FOR YOU

SHALL BE QUENCHED BY ERASING YOU FROM EXISTENCE...!

...IF YOU ALREADY KNOW, THEN IT'S SIMPLE.

MY PURPOSE IS TO AVENGE MYSELF AGAINST YOUR CLAN...

HEAD OF THE NEKUNI FAMILY, KYOICHI NEKUNI...!

HEY,

...NOW, PREPARE YOURSE—

WHAT IF YOU DON'T TRY TO EXTERMINATE THE NEKUNI FAMILY,

AND JUST LET ME BEAR YOUR HATRED INSTEAD?

...HUH?

INSTEAD OF A MASSACRE TO AVENGE YOURSELF,

WOULDN'T IT BE EASIER AND MORE SATISFYING FOR YOU TO CONCENTRATE YOUR HATRED ON AND SLOWLY TORTURE A SINGLE PERSON?

NO... NO, WAIT, UM...

YOU'RE JUST TRYING TO DELAY THE INEVITA—

IF YOU DON'T THINK I'M SERIOUS, THEN DO WHATEVER YOU WANT.

WHA... WHAAT...?

OH, IT'S NOT GOOD AT DEALING WITH PRESSURE.

FUFUFU... WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO? IT'S NOT A BAD OFFER, RIGHT?

SEE? EVEN WHILE YOU'RE THINKING, TIME IS PASSING, LITTLE BY...

SILENCE.

WTT—

DAMN IT... PUNCHING ME OUT OF NOWHERE...

WELL, I GUESS I WAS ASKING FOR IT.

Ow.

SORRY, I PROVOKED YOU TOO MUCH.

Ahaha

...THEN, PROVE TO ME THAT YOU'RE A HUMAN BEING

CAPABLE OF SACRIFICING YOURSELF TO PROTECT YOUR CLAN FROM BEING MASSACRED.

...OR SO I CONVINCED HER...

I'LL GIVE YOU THREE DAYS, INCLUDING TODAY...

IF YOU CAN'T PROVE YOURSELF, THE NEKUNI FAMILY WILL BE WIPED OUT...!

...NATSUHO, IF YOU STAY THAT FAR BEHIND, YOU'LL LOSE ME.

SHE'S SURPRISINGLY INNOCENT.

LIKE... AS IF WE'RE... CLO... CLOSE OR SOMETHING!

DO... DON'T CALL ME JUST BY... MY FIRST NAME,

TO BEGIN WITH, WHY IS HE ACTING SO HAUGHTY AND TALKING TO ME ON A FIRST-NAME BASIS...?

BEING WITH THIS GUY DRIVES ME CRAZY...

HE... HEY...

I HATE HIM... I... I REALLY HATE HIM...

BJT I'M NOT REALLY USED TO ADDRESSING ANYONE BY THEIR LAST NAME, EITHER...

ふぅ…

ふぅ…

ん…

そぉくん…

I... I'M NOT GOOD AT... TRANSFOR-MING...

My ears.

HE... HE SCARED ME..!

IF YOU CAN'T STAND PEOPLE, WHY DON'T YOU TRANSFORM INTO A CAT LIKE BEFORE...?

ARE YOU REALLY A YOKAI?

AND I... DON'T WANNA BECAUSE... IT'S TIRING.

…?!

LE.... LEAVE ME ALONE...!

ANYWAY, WHERE ARE... WE GOING...

YOU WERE WAITING THERE THE WHOLE TIME!?

HUH!?

I HATE YOU...

WHY WOULD YOU COME HERE AT THIS TIME OF DAY...

...SORRY, MY BAD.

ZO ZO ZO

It's like she's vibrating.

Counts how many people are inside

I THOUGHT I DIDN'T SEE YOU INSIDE... WHY DIDN'T YOU COME IN?

YOU DON'T THINK IT'S FUN EXPERIMENTING AND TRYING OUT NEW THINGS?

YEAH, BJT WHEN YOU GO INSIDE A BOOKSTORE, YOU FIND SOME BOOKS WITH INTERESTING COVERS, OR FIND SOME HIDDEN GEMS IN THE BARGAIN BIN, AND END UP SPENDING A LONG TIME INSIDE.

I didn't ask

Ton of books bought just by looking at the cover

AS SOON AS I TAKE A BOOK... A TJB MIGHT FALL ON ME...

AND... IF I CONSTANTLY STICK MY HAND INTO STJFF...

...NO, NOT REALLY. AND I'M NOT INTERESTED IN... THOSE KINDS OF THINGS.

She saw me take a tub to the head

NO, IT WON'T.

ㄱㅇ

恨み来、恋、恨み恋。 1

BUT ALL HE EVER DID WAS "SHOP AND WANDER AROUND OUTSIDE"...

IT'S ALREADY SUNSET ON THE SECOND DAY...

SIGH

HH

What's that?

Oh?

...Hmm

I COULD TRY TO MAKE HIM SHOW HIS TRUE NATURE BY TAKING SOMEONE HOSTAGE...

?...

ARE WE... GOING NEXT...?

S... SO WHERE...

はぁ

I CAN'T INVOLVE PEOPLE THAT I DON'T HATE, EITHER. WHAT DO I DO...

...NO, I CAN'T DO THAT- I'M TOO SHY AROUND PEOPLE...

!????

?

!

WH-WHERE DID HE RUN OFF TO...

NOTH...

IT... IT'S NOTH...

N-NO...

My ears are out!

My ears are out!

WHERE DID ALL THESE PEOPLE COME FROM...!?

JH...

UM,

WHAT!?? HUH!?

RUSH HOUR

HUH...? HE'S HAPPY ABOUT SOMETHING?

I-I HATE... I HATE YOU, YOU FOOL!!!

Tha-that's that Yokai Band, isn't it?

WHAT? WHAT IS HE DOING!?

OH, THERE HE IS!!

※ FOLLOWING THE CROWD

恨み来、恋、恨み恋。 1

I HARDLY RAN INTO ANYONE BACK-HOME...

BUT WHY ARE THERE SO MANY PEOPLE, ANYWAY...?

I WAS ABLE TO FIND A PLACE TO HIDE... BUT THERE ARE STILL TOO MANY PEOPLE FOR ME TO TRANSFORM...

.....

...I KINDA WANNA GO HOME NOW.

ふぇ...

!??

S... SORRY...

I LET MY CURIOSITY GET THE BETTER OF ME...

HERE, NOW YOU CAN TRANSFORM, RIGHT?

.....?

...??

ARE WE GOOD TO GO?

SORRY ABOUT THAT.

ゴ

ゴ

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ド

ド

COME TO THINK OF IT, NATSUHO, WHERE DID YOU STAY LAST NIGHT?

MY HEAD HURTS...

ズキン

...WHY IS HE APOLOGIZING TO SOMEONE WHO CAME FOR THE SOLE PURPOSE OF HATING HIM?

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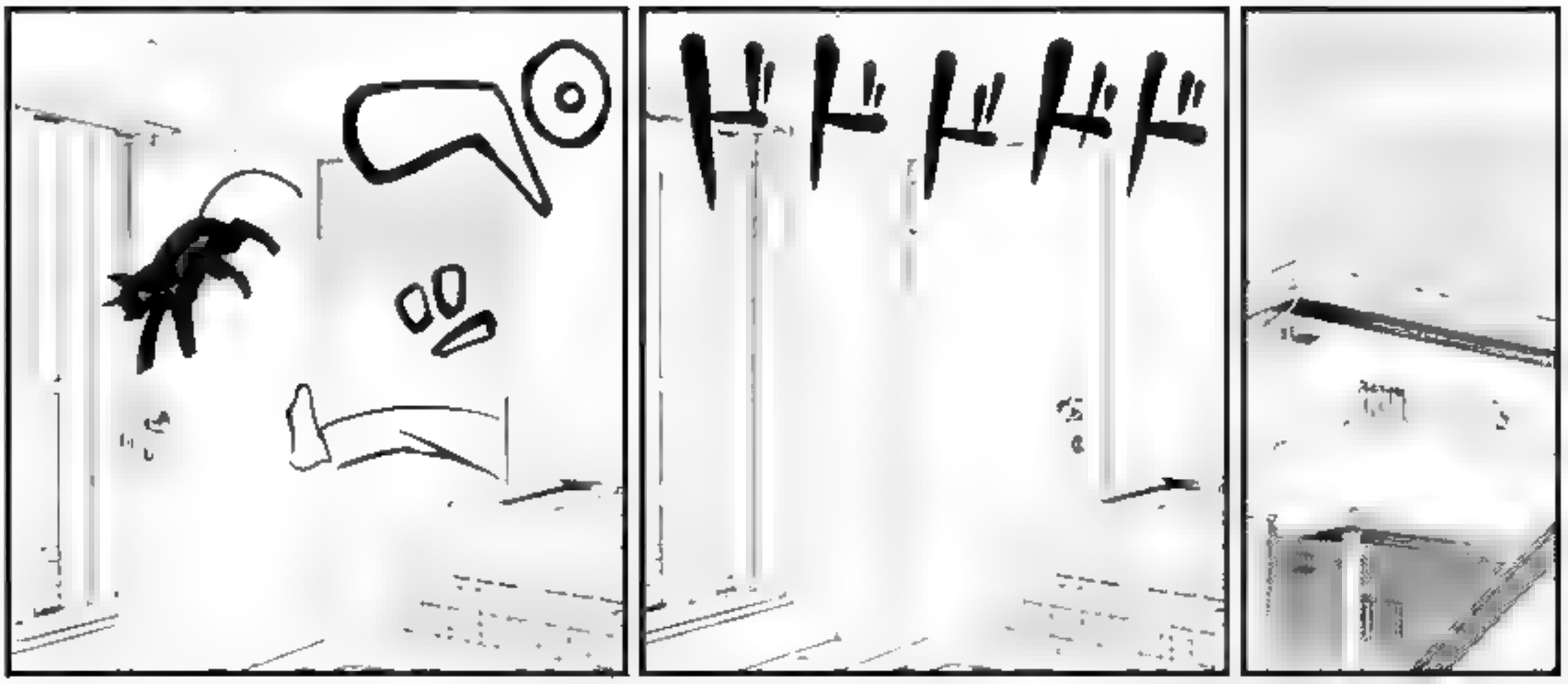
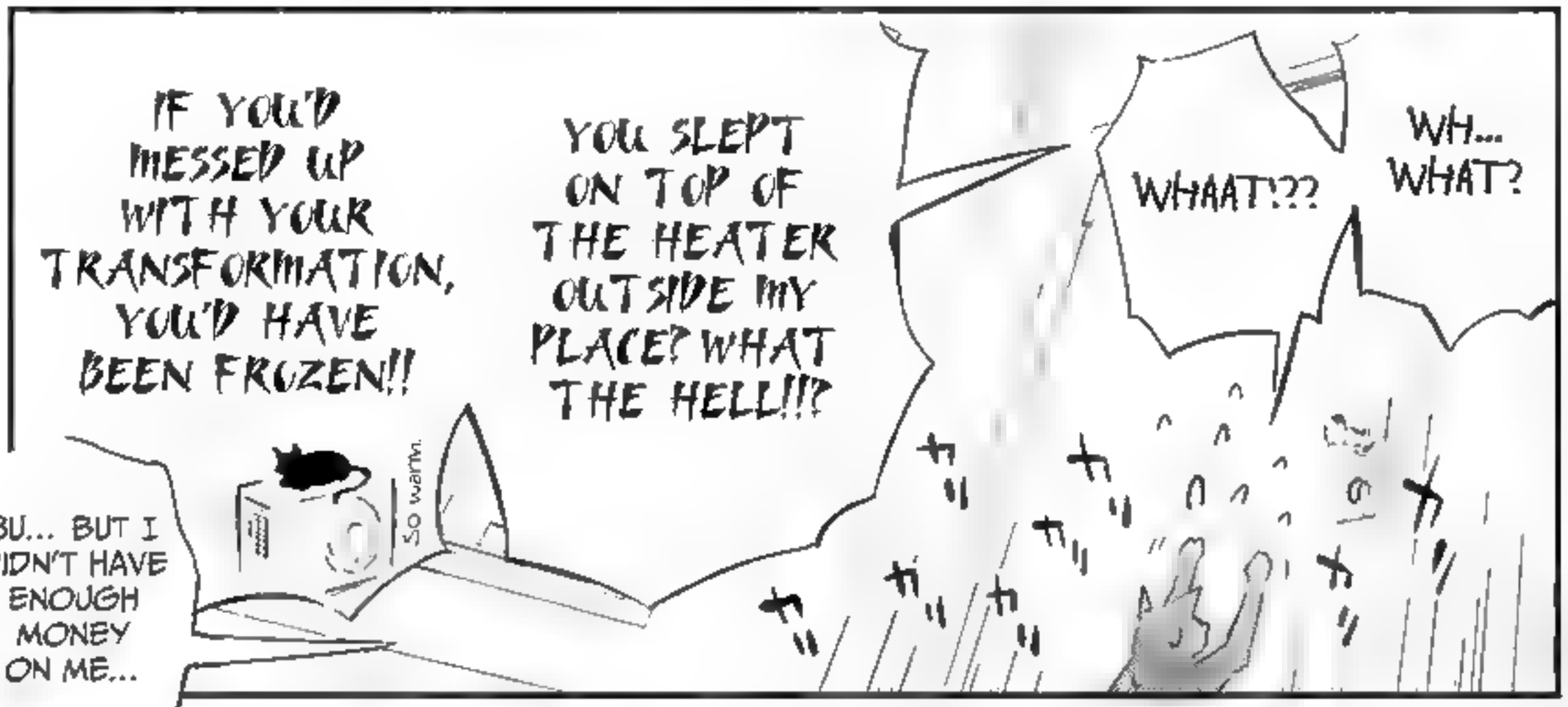



IF YOU'D MESSED UP WITH YOUR TRANSFORMATION, YOU'D HAVE BEEN FROZEN!!
YOU SLEPT ON TOP OF THE HEATER OUTSIDE MY PLACE? WHAT THE HELL!!?
WHAAT!??
WH... WHAT?
BU... BUT I DIDN'T HAVE ENOUGH MONEY ON ME...
So warm.

AND BY THE WAY, IF YOU REFUSE TO TAKE ONE, I'LL CALL ONE OF MY FRIENDS TO SHOVE YOU IN THERE.

I'LL GIVE YOU A CHANGE OF CLOTHES.
WHATEVER. JUST WASH YOUR CLOTHES AND TAKE A BATH.
And stop scratching!

DAMN IT, THEY GOT ME...

Doesn't this washing machine have too many buttons!?

Oh. But got some good ones, too so, I guess it's alright

I GOT IT CAUSE THE COVER LOOKED COOL, BUT IT'S AN ANTHOLOGY...

I.. I WAS THINKING N THE TUB .. AND STAYED IN IT A LITTLE TOO LONG AND NOW I'M DIZZY...

...YOU'RE KINDA STUMBLING A BIT, ARE YOU ALRIGHT?

SH... SHADDUP ..

YOU'RE A RAT, SO... WHY ARE YOUR CLOTHES SO BIG...?

YOU'RE OUT? HEH, IT'S THE WRONG SIZE, ISN'T IT.

Pat

OH YEAH... SHE DEFINITELY STAYED N FOR TOO...

ZZZ

!!??

THIS CAT

ISN'T WEARING

ANYTHING UNDERNEATH!

...HUH?

OH SHOOT, I'M GETTING NERVOUS, WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME?

CURIOSITY

NO UNDER-WEAR

WE... WELL, I GUESS THAT MAKES SENSE... IT'S NOT LIKE SHE CAN WEAR A GUY'S UNDERWEAR... AND HERS ARE BEING WASHED RIGHT NOW...

WA...?? WAIT A SECOND, WHY ISN'T SHE WEARING ANYTHING UNDERNEATH...!?

...WHAT AM I SAYING, IDIOT! FOOL! WHAT ARE YOU NOTICING NOW OF ALL TIMES!? YOU'RE JUST GOING TO MAKE THE SITUATION WORSE!!

WHEN SHE'S QUIET, SHE'S ACTUALLY PRETTY CUTE...

SO WARM...

はふ

HE'S GOT NOTHING TO GAIN FROM GETTING CLOSER TO ME...

...WHY DID HE LET HIS ENEMY INTO HIS OWN HOUSE...!?

IF YOU'RE NOT INVOLVED, YOU WON'T BE BETRAYED.

IF YOU DON'T SHOW CURIOSITY, YOU WON'T BE INVOLVED.

DID I GET TOO MUCH BLOOD RUSH TO MY HEAD..?

...?

HE DOESN'T SEEM CUNNING ENOUGH FOR SOMETHING LIKE THAT...

WAS THAT SOME KIND OF PLAN...?

COME TO THINK OF IT, FOCUSING ALL THE HATE ON HIMSELF...

HATE!

ズキ・・・

WHA... WHAT'S GOING ON...?

ズキ・・・

SOME-THING'S ECHOING IN MY HEAD...

NO... THIS ISN'T

JUST A HEAD-ACHE...

IT'S A VOICE.

OH, YOU'RE UP? IT'S ALREADY NOON—

……!?

ID ga...

ID ga...?

NA...

NATSUHO?

HATE.

HATE.

DON'T GET ON TOP ME WHEN YOU'RE...!

WAH, HE—

HEY, NATSUHO...!

UH... UM, ATTACK OR NO ATTACK...

...MY HEAD AGAIN...

わぁ

WHA...??

WHY...

WH... WH..

わっ

...? SHE'S ACTING DIFFERENT...

P... PLEASE PUT SOMETHING ON UNDER-NEATH...

↓ Verifying

.....

NO...

HUH?

.....?

WHY-

And don't start shaking!

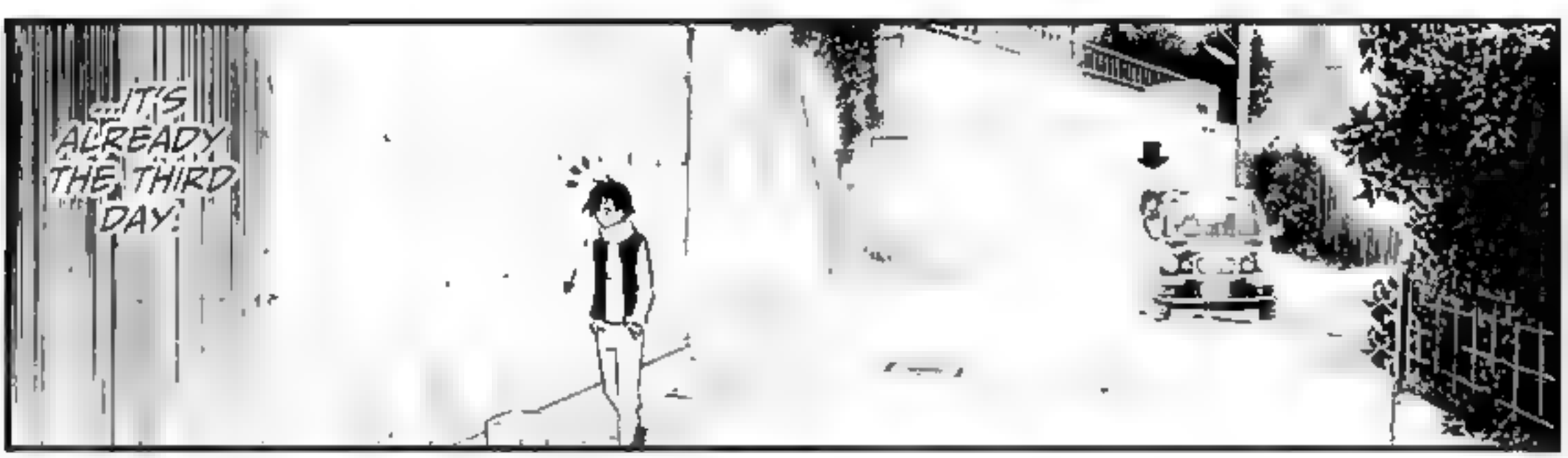
HE-HEY! DON'T FREEZE UP ON ME NOW...!

恨み来、恋、恨み恋。 1

N.. NO, IT'S NOT.. A HEADACHE..
ARE YOU ALRIGHT? SHOULD I GET YOU SOMETHING FOR YOUR HEADACHE?

I hate you
-I hate you
キー!
...

...WAIT, WHEN DID IT GET BETTER...?
I DON'T... NEED IT.


...IT'S ALREADY THE THIRD DAY.

WHAT!? HOW DID THAT HAPPEN!?

HUH?
JUST WHAT IS HE...

THE FATE OF HIS LIFE WILL BE DECIDED TODAY, BUT IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE HE'S GOING TO BEG FOR MERCY OR RUN AWAY...

GET BACK HERE YOU BRATS!!

HE'S GETTING TRICKED BY STUFF LIKE THAT AGAIN...

...THAT LOOKS KINDA FUN...

IS HE NOT AFRAID OF BEING BETRAYED AFTER SHOWING CURIOSITY...?

SO DOES THAT MEAN THIS HEADACHE IS AN IMPULSE AS A HATEFUL CAT TO HATE MY TARGETS...?

AND THE PAIN COMES BACK EVERY TIME I'M NOT CONSCIOUS OF MY HATE...

THE VOICE TOLD ME TO HATE HIM YESTERDAY...

...AGAIN.

キン

THEN, HATING HIM WOULD HAVE BEEN NATURAL FOR ME, AND IT WOULD HAVE ENDED RIGHT THERE, AND NONE OF THIS WOULD HAVE HAD TO HAPPEN...

IF ME WERE LIKE THE DETESTABLE RAT IN THE STORY.

HUH!?

SO CLOSE... WHEN DID YOU...!?

WHAT?

WHY DID I TELL HIM TO PROVE TO ME THAT HE'S WORTHY...?

WHA..? WHAT ARE YOU...

PUNISHMENT DELIVERED

GE... GET AWAY FROM..

NATSUHO.

ﾌﾜｯ

IT'S A BIT COLD TODAY. WEAR THIS AROUND YOUR NECK.

*your nose is dripping

What's with that pose?

HERE.

ah...

.....

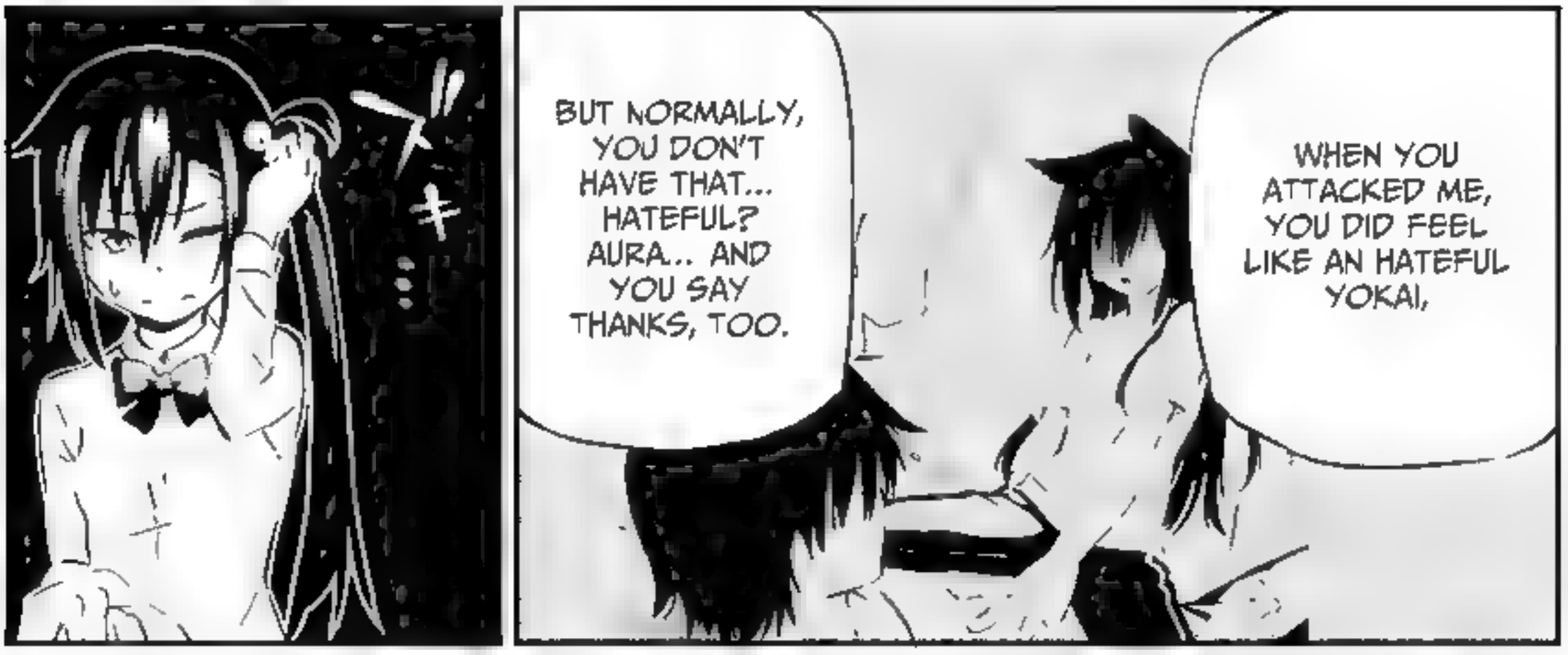
I... I WASN'T THANKING... YOU.

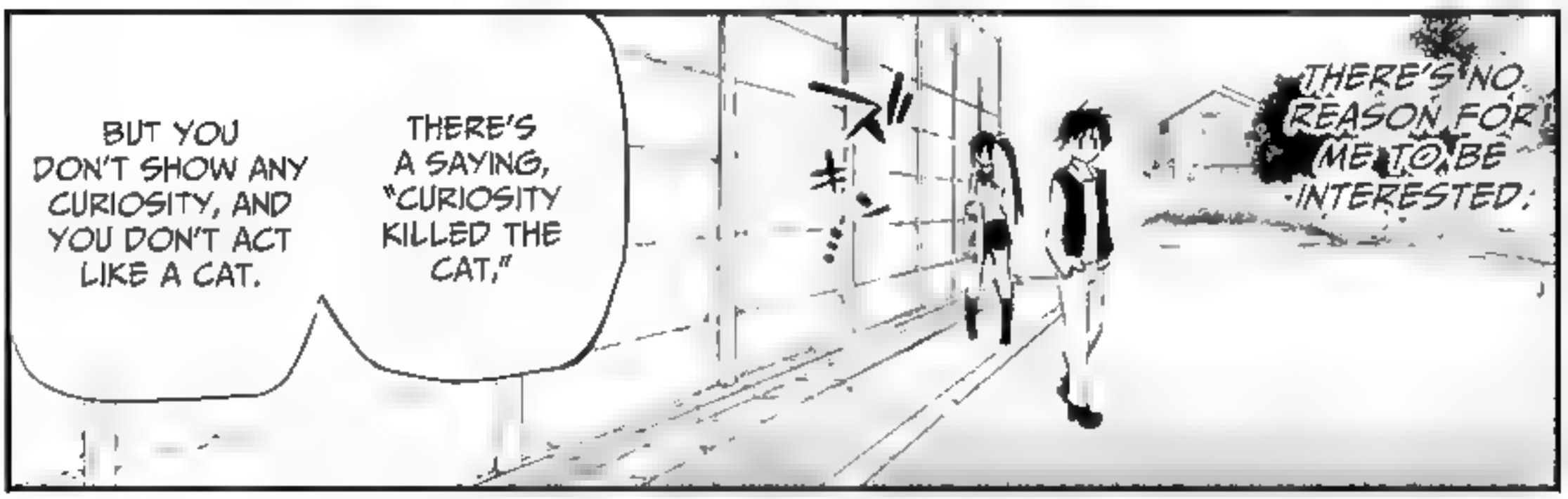
NO, UM...

...YOU'RE MYSTERIOUS, NATSUHO...

THA...

THANK...


BUT NORMALLY, YOU DON'T HAVE THAT... HATEFUL? AURA... AND YOU SAY THANKS, TOO.
WHEN YOU ATTACKED ME, YOU DID FEEL LIKE AN HATEFUL YOKAI,


BUT YOU DON'T SHOW ANY CURIOSITY, AND YOU DON'T ACT LIKE A CAT.
THERE'S A SAYING, "CURIOSITY KILLED THE CAT,"
THERE'S NO REASON FOR ME TO BE INTERESTED.

MORE THAN A YOKAI, YOU'RE...
THE MORE I'M INVOLVED WITH SOMEONE AND SOMEONE IS INVOLVED WITH ME..!
THE MORE I SHOW INTEREST AND SOMEONE SHOWS INTEREST IN ME...

JUST A NORMAL GIRL.

HEY, YOUR SCARF FELL O...

HURTS SO MUCH...!!

MY HEAD...

SHE'S ACTING DIFFERENT AGAIN..!?

!!

.....

NA... NATSUHO...!?

I SHOULD HAVE...

I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT I'M SAYING.

NATSUHO...?

A CAT HAS NO NEED TO LISTEN TO ITS PREY BEG FOR MERCY.

I SHOULD HAVE DONE THIS FROM THE BEGINNING.

BECAUSE MY HEAD HURTS SO MUCH...

WHEN I WANT TO KILL, I SHOULD JUST KILL.

WHEN I WANT TO HUNT,

SO, SO MUCH.

THIS FARCE ENDS HERE,

NEKUNI...!

I TOLD YA YOU'D GET YERSELF HURT SOMEDAY, DIDN'T I?

YOU REALLY ARE HELPLESS...!

THIS IS BAD....

...HGH.

DAMN...

...NGAH!

NATSJ...

OH...

!!

YA GOT YERSELF INTO SOME WEIRD MESS AGAIN...

SHEESH...

THOSE HORNS... THIS GREAT STRENGTH...

.....

...I'VE HEARD THAT THE TWELVE CLANS INHERIT SUPERHUMAN POWERS...

I SEE.

YOU MUST BE THE UCHIGURA FAMILY'S...!

D

D

I'M HEAD OF TH' USHIGURA FAMILY, AYAKA USHIGURA!

I CAME FLYIN' TO YA, JUST LIKE I SAID I WOULD, KYOICHI-SAN!

NOW'S NOT THE TIME.

I SHOULDA JUST SAID I'D ALWAYS KNOW WHERE YA WERE...!

...OH NO!

YOU CAME FLYING...? BUT HOW DID YOU KNOW THAT WE WERE HERE...?

ANYWAY, HOLD ON A SECOND.

IT'S...

SANA-CHAN TOLD ME TO BE WARY OF THIS AREA.

She's got a good nose

HEY, NATSUHO! KNOCK IT OFF...!

NATSUHO...?

OR LISTEN TO WHAT WE HAVE TO SAY...!

I'M PRETTY SURE THAT IT DOESN'T WANT TO TALK...

IS IN THE WAY.

THE RAT'S GUARD

IN THE WAY

SHE'S IN THE WAY.

YA'VE ALREADY LOST WHO YA ARE...

YA REALLY ARE DRIPPING WITH HATE...

I HATE HER.

IT'S SUPER HARD TO FIGHT AGAINST SOMETHING LIKE THAT...

..BUT EVEN IF IT IS A YOKAI CAT,

LOVES CATS

...BUT I WON'T...

!!

WHOA...!!

I'LL NEVER LET YOU HAVE YOUR WAY WITH KYOICHI-SAN!!!

COULD HER HEADACHE HAVE BEEN...

COME TO THINK OF IT, HER PERSONALITY CHANGED YET AGAIN...

DAMN IT... I WANT TO STOP HER, BUT SHE'S NOT LISTENING AT ALL...

NATSUHO...!

!!

!!

OWW...

AND IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE I-HAVE-THE TIME-TO-GO GET_THAT...

IF ONLY I HADN'T THROWN IT OUT OF IMPULSE...

EVEN IF I CAN LAND A COUPLE OF BLOWS ON HER, AS LONG AS I'M BARE-HANDED, I LOSE IN RANGE AND STRENGTH...

I LEAPED BACK TO REDUCE THE IMPACT, BUT IT STILL PACKED A PUNCH...

I HAVE TO GET BY WITH MY BARE HANDS UNTIL THERE'S AN OPENING...

WELL, THERE'S NO OTHER CHOICE...!

IT SHAPE-SHIFTED ITS ARM...

IT CAN TRANSF...

ドロ

AGH...

GH..

AYAKA!!

I TOOK... THE BRUNT OF IT...

恨み来、恋、恨み恋。 1

..THAT'S RIGHT, I CAME TO KILL HIM..

.....

WHAT.. IS THIS HUMAN BABBLING ABOUT?

NATSUHO..

YOU'RE AFTER ME, AREN'T YOU..?

HATE...

ズン…

..THAT'S RIGHT, I HAVE TO HATE ..

ズン…

NOT...

ｱ"

ｱ"

ｱ"

I'M...

JUST

WHERE DO YA THINK YER GOIN'...?

AYAKA...!

DONE WITH YA YET!!

OF THIS WOMAN WHO WAS SHOWING HOSTILITY TOWARDS ME.

I BECAME JEALOUS

FOR SOME REASON,

BECAUSE I DIDN'T HAVE THEM.

THE DESPER-ATION TO PROTECT SOMETHING,

OR THE TENACITY TO FACE AN ENEMY HEAD-ON.

I DIDN'T HAVE EITHER OF THEM.

...I DON'T KNOW WHAT HAPPENED BETWEEN YOU TWO...
KYOICHI-SAN...! IT'S STILL BREATHING...
...! NATSU...
ORDINARILY... ACCORDING TO THE LEGENDS OF THE HATEFJL CAT,
IT'S NOT A YOKAI I SHOULD BE ABLE TO DEFEAT.
はぁ
はぁ...
.....!
BJT CAN I DELIVER THE FINAL BLOW...?

BUT YOU WON'T GET ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY LIKE THIS TO KILL YOUR NATURAL ENEMY...

I HAVE NO IDEA WHY I WAS ABLE TO FIGHT A YOKAI LIKE THAT AND WIN...

AND THE HATEFUL CAT IS A YOKAI THAT INHERITS HATE AND TURNS IT INTO STRENGTH.

...HATE IS A POWERFUL EMOTION THAT CAN EVEN CURSE PEOPLE.

I'D BE CONSUMED BY HATE.

YOU WERE KILLED, KYOICHI-SAN,

...IF

SHE CAN ATTACK FROM A DISTANCE...!

IS IT THE SAME AS BACK THEN...!?

WH... AT?

...!!

MY LEGS GOT A BIT... WE... WE'LL BOTH BE...!

AYAKA, ARE YOU OKAY!?

HUH? YE—YEAH, TH' WOUND ISN'T THAT DEEP, SO I'LL PROBABLY BE ABLE TO WALK IN A LITTLE BIT...
WILL YOU BE ALRIGHT ON YOUR OWN WITH YOUR LEG LIKE THAT?
...AYAKA.
IT... RAN AWAY...? BUT WHY...?
...?

ARE YA...?
WAIT, KYOICHI-SAN...!

IT LOOKS LIKE MY WOUNDS LET ME PUT MY SURVIVAL INSTINCTS OVER MY HATE...
...I WAS SOMEHOW... ABLE TO RUN AWAY ALL THE WAY HERE...
THEY'RE HEALING, BUT I DON'T HAVE THE STRENGTH TO FIGHT ANY MORE...

I FINALLY UNDERSTAND, WHY I MADE THAT PROMISE...

JUST LOOK AT WHAT HAPPENED.

...THAT'S EXACTLY RIGHT...

THERE'S A SAYING THAT GOES, "CURIOSITY KILLED THE CAT"...

BECAUSE HE WAS SO STRAIGHTFORWARD AND SIMPLE-MINDED.

SORRY, I PROVOKED YOU TOO MUCH.

WELL, I GUESS I WAS ASKING FOR IT

DAMN IT PUNCHIN' ME OUT NOWHERE

BECAUSE HE WAS SO DIFFERENT FROM HOW I ASSUMED HE'D BE.

BUT BECAUSE I SHOWED INTEREST...

NATSUHO!

TO BE INTERESTED ANYMORE...

I DIDN'T WANT...

IS GOING TO KILL ME.

THIS CURI-OSITY

GREAT, YOU'RE ALIVE...! I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT HAVE DIED BECAJSE OF YOUR WOUNDS...

D...

DID YOU COME TO DELIVER THE FINAL BLOW...?

AS IF.

I DON'T... NEED YOU...

WAH... DON... DON'T COME CLOSER!

...YOU...

CAME TO YOUR SENSES AFTER AYAKA SLASHED YOU, DIDN'T YOU?

NO...

BUT HOW DO I PUT IT... A CAT SHOULD HAVE BETTER REFLEXES, AND BE GOOD AT HUNTING, AND ON TOP OF THAT, YOU WERE HUGE.

SOMETHING HAD TO HAVE BEEN STOPPING YOU FROM GOING ALL-OUT.

YOU WERE ALREADY LOSING YOURSELF BEFORE YOU TRANSFORMED INTO THAT HUGE CAT, WEREN'T YOU?

...NO...

NO...

NO...

YOU COULD HAVE EASILY FINISHED US OFF, COULDN'T YOU?

...BESIDES, WITH THAT LAST ATTACK,

DON'T WANT TO HATE ANYMO...

NATSUHO, YOU YOURSELF

……!!

……

!!

YOU INSTICTIVELY AVOIDED A FATAL ATTACK.

...SEE, LOOK.

IF THEY GO AGAINST THAT CONDITION, THEY'LL HEAR VOICES THAT MAKE THEIR HEADS HJRT, LIKE IMPULSIVE ORDERS.

...I REMEMBERED SOMETHING A YOKAI FRIEND OF MINE TOLD ME...

FOR A YOKAI LIKE AN AZUKI-ARAI OR AN AKANAME THAT WERE BORN WITH A SPECIFIC CONDITION...

AND THE MORE THEY FIGHT THE IMPULSE, THE MORE THEY BECOME SWALLOWED BY IT.

I WON'T BE ABLE TO DISPEL MY HATE...

SO... SO WHAT...?

IMPULSE... OR... NOT...

THE MORE I BECOME INTERESTED IN YOU...

SO WHY... DID YOU COME...?

AND THE MORE I COME TO KNOW YOU, THE MORE MY HEAD HURTS..

ALL YOU'LL END UP BECOMING... IS A TARGET... FOR MY HATE...

IDIOT.

HOW COULD I *NOT* COME AFTER SEEING YOU IN SO MUCH PAIN?

WHAT THE HECK...

WHAT...

THE HECK IS THAT...?

...AND...

...ER,

NATSUHO,

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN IN A RELATIONSHIP WITH ANOTHER BOY?

YOU... SHOULDN'T...

UNTIL YOU'RE OLDER...

BU... BUT THATS NOT... NOT FOR...

SHE REALLY IS INNOCENT.

I HARDLY EVEN TALK TO BOYS...

WHA...!? WHA-WHA-WHA-WHAT ARE YOU...

SO NO?

?

...NATSUHO.

!?

FORGET ABOUT BEING THE HATEFUL CAT OR WHATEVER, AND JUST...

SO...

...I'M DOING THIS OUT OF MY OWN FREE WILL.

LET... LET ME...

WHAT ARE...

WH—

.....!??

HATE ME.

I...

I WAS CURIOUS...

SO...

OH...

WHY... DID...?

WHA...?

WHA- HUH- WHA...

HOW... SHOULD I ANSWER?

UMM...

I
ooo
I
ooo

HUH...? ISN'T A KISS SOMETHING YOU ONLY DO WITH SOMEONE YOU LIKE...?

HUH...? DOES THAT MEAN I CAN'T HAVE MY FIRST KISS AGAIN UNTIL I'M REINCARNATED...?

HE TOOK MY FIRST KISS OUT OF CURIOSITY...?

...? WHAT DID HE JUST SAY...?

YOU

I HATE YOU!

!!

000

000

T!!

IF YOU HAVE TO DO IT, AT LEAST PICK A DIFFERENT SPOT..!

GYAAAH!! WAIT!

AT LEAST LET ME GET IN ONE MORE!!

you'll crush them!

YO... THIS IS... NGH...

WA... WAIT A SECOND!

SHOULD ONLY BE DONE AFTER...

THINGS... LIKE THAT..

YOU KNOW YOU LIKE...

I... I HATE YOU...

..HUH?

I HATE YOU SO MUCH...

EVEN AT A TIME LIKE THIS...

...WHAT DID YOU JUST SAY, NATSUHO?

IS GONE...

MY HEADACHE...

MORE THAN IMPULSE,

BECAUSE

WHEN I HATED HIM TO THE POINT THAT I LOST CONTROL OF MYSELF...

...

...I SEE... IT'S NOT LIKE BEFORE,

I...

I SAID I HATE YOU... SO MUCH...

IT WAS MY OWN FEELINGS.

I HATE YOU...

LIKE IT WAS SOMETHING HE MIGHT ACTUALLY DO...

BUT SOMEHOW... I FEEL LIKE HE WAS HALF-SERIOUS,

I hate you.

?

...THEN THAT MEANS ALL THAT STUFF ABOUT HIM BEING CURIOUS WAS A TRICK TO GET ME WORKED UP...

WE HAD A TALK ABOUT HOW YOU'LL EITHER HATE ME OR MASSACRE EVERYONE, RIGHT?

IT'S SUNSET ON THE THIRD DAY.

...SO?

!!

I... I HATE YOU...

THA... THAT'S NOT FAIR!

NO... BRINGING IT UP AFTER YOU'VE... MADE ME HATE YOU...

HUH?

WELL, IF THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED, WHAT CAN I DO?

Huh?

FINE BY ME.

I GUESS I'LL BE SEEING YOU A LOT, NATSUHO.

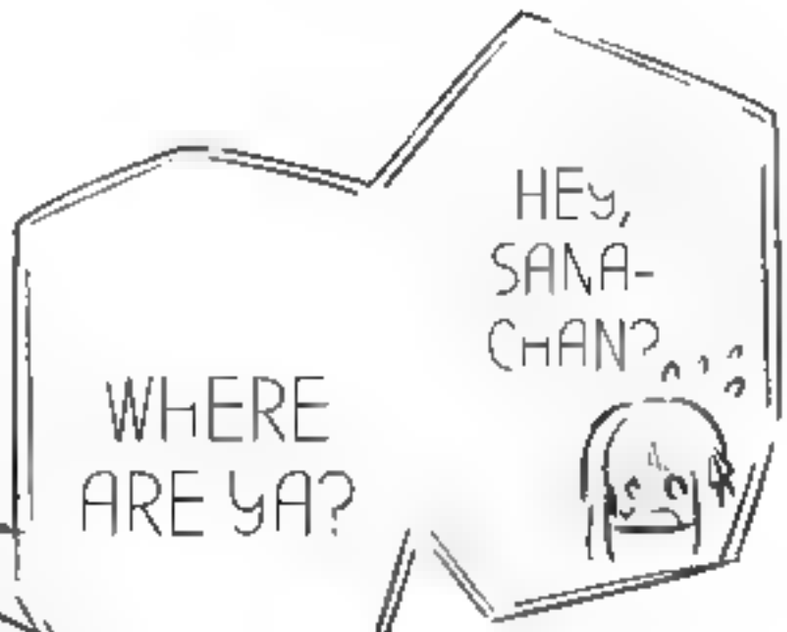
I... I HATE YOU...

I'M GOING TO HATE YOU WITH ALL THAT I'VE GOT, SO PREPARE YOURSELF...!

Anyway, I didn't know first kisses tasted like blood

I-I-I-I-idiot

恨み来、恋、恨み恋。1



SANA INUHARA

SO,

THE BARRIER AROUND THE TOWN WAS STRENGTHENED BECAUSE THE HATEFUL CAT APPEARED AND THE OGRES NEAR THE CITY BORDER ARE MORE ACTIVE AND ALL THAT.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

MOVED IN ON THE FOURTH DAY

HOW DID THIS HAPPEN...?

IF... THAT'S THE CASE, I CAN'T DO "THAT" EITHER...

DING DONG

ESPECIALLY AYAKA...

OH, AND IT'D BE BAD IF ANYONE FROM THE TWELVE CLANS FOUND OUT ABOUT YOU BEING THE HATEFUL CAT.

WHAT SHOULD I DO ABOUT SCHOOL...?

WAIT, YOUR LEG IS ALREADY OKAY...?

You seem more than okay!

HMM THAT'S...

WA... WAIT A SECOND,

!!

USHIGARA!?
OH NO...

AH...

GYAAAA!?

KITTYY-
YYYYY-
YYYY-
YYY!!

HUH?
WHY
WOULD
IT?

UM.. I KINDA
PICKED IT UP.
I MEAN, DOESN'T
SOMETHING LIKE
THE TIMING OF IT
ALL BOTHER
YOU...?

WOW,
SHE'S
DENSE.

IT'S SO
SMALL AND
CUUUUTE!

WHERE
DID YA
GET THIS
KITTY!?

UH...

UM...

...PLEASE,

OH, GIMME, I'LL DO IT.

ER, THAT'S KINDA TIGHT...

Let me.

purrr...

OH, YOU'RE RIGHT.

It came off

Lemme go!

Lemme go!

OH, KYOICH.-SAN, YOUR BANDAGE IS COMING UNDONE.

...DON'T MAKE ME WORRY ANYMORE...

BUT I ALSO LEARNED THAT AN ENEMY THAT I FOUGHT BITTERLY AGAINST CAN ALSO MAKE THESE KINDS OF EXPRESSIONS.

Since you're here already, eat with me before you go

Wha!?

THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT,

CURIOSITY IS A TROUBLESOME THING.

...SORRY.

AND MORE THAN ANYTHING,

Sorry have to put it on the floor

HERE, NATSUHO.

恨み来、恋、恨み恋。 1

IT COULD BE GOOD IF YOU JUST TRY IT, YOU KNOW?

...YOU MIGHT BE SURPRISED.

It looks a bit like Rokorokoboshi? Or whatever it's called

I don't want t

BUT DOESN'T THIS HAVE SOME WEIRD INGREDIENTS...?

I DON'T REALLY CARE WHILE I'M IN CAT FORM...

I'm a Yokai so it's fine

Come to think of it aren't cats bad with onions?

I THOUGHT JUST MAYBE,

!!!

DEAD

THAT I HATE SO MU...

I COULD TAKE SOME INTEREST IN THIS HEAD OF THE RAT CLAN

UM... MAYBE YOU SHOULDN'T PUT IN RANDOM INGREDIENTS JUST OUT OF CURIOSITY.

...HUH?

Why not?

.....

JUST A BIT,

JUST A LITTLE BIT,

恨み来、恋、恨み恋。

ウラミコイ コイ ウラミコイ

THE ONES WHO TAKE IT A STEP FURTHER AND ACTIVELY HARM HUMANS ARE GENERALLY REFERRED TO AS OGRES.

AND THOSE WHO DETEST THE IDEA OF DOING SO.

THOSE WHO ARE GIVEN SURNAMES AND COEXIST WITH HUMANS,

THERE ARE BASICALLY TWO DIFFERENT KINDS OF YOKAI IN THIS WORLD.

WHY DON'T YOU JUST ADMIT IT...?

...HEY, NATSUHO.

HOWEVER, EVEN AMONG THOSE WITH SURNAMES, THERE ARE YOKAI THAT ATTACK HUMANS.

IN FACT, THERE'S ONE RIGHT NEXT TO ME.

AND SHE'S LOST.

What road am I on? Huh?

Hu-huh? Huh?

YOU'RE LOST, AREN'T YOU...?

"IT'S MUCH WORSE THAN THAT" MODE

OH, SHE CAN'T EVEN HEAR ME.

AND ON TOP OF THAT, SHE'S EXTREMELY SHY.

SHE'S SUPPOSED TO BE FIGURING OUT DIRECTIONS, BUT SHE'S JUST AVOIDING ANYWHERE WITH A LOT OF PEOPLE...

Can't go that way.

ヒソヒソ

ス…

ヒソヒソ

IS FROM THE NEKOGAZAKI FAMILY, HUMANS WHO BECAME YOKAI BECAUSE OF AN ANCIENT GRUDGE AGAINST MY CLAN, THE NEKUNI FAMILY.

THE HATEFUL CAT

...I CAN'T BELIEVE SHE WAS AFTER MY LIFE...

CHAPTER 2: A CORNERED RAT WILL EVEN BITE A RAT

BUT ONE THING LED TO ANOTHER, AND MY LIFE WAS SPARED.

NATSUHO IS THE HEAD OF THAT FAMILY, AND SHE CAME AFTER MY LIFE A FEW DAYS AGO,

AS I SAID EARLIER, SHE'S CURRENTLY JUST A LOST GIRL.

YOU WANT TO FIND THE WAY YOU CAME IN THROUGH?

I hate these streets, they're so complicated!

How far out in the countryside are you from.

Hey, your tail is sticking out!

AND ON TOP OF THAT, BECAUSE OF SOME REASONS, SHE CAN'T GO HOME NOW, SO SHE'S LIVING AT MY PLACE.

BUT...

AND WHEN I CAME HERE... THE BARRIER JUST HAPPENED TO BE OPEN, SO MAYBE...

BUT... THEY SAID THAT THEY REDID THE CITY BARRIER, SO I DOUBT IT...

YEAH, BECAUSE I DON'T KNOW WHEN I'LL BE ABLE TO GO BACK...

YOU'RE CONCENTRATING YOUR HATE ON ME, SO HAVING ONE MORE PERSON IN MY PLACE ISN'T...

NO... NO, THAT'S NOT... WHAT I MEANT...

OH, BUT IF YOU'RE TRYING TO MOVE OUT BECAUSE YOU FEEL BAD, DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.

WHAT I'M TRYING TO SAY IS...

REALLY...!?

...WELL, I GUESS IT WOULDN'T HURT TO TRY.

.....

I... DON'T... WANT TO... STAY....

IN THE SAME ROOM... AS SOMEONE..

WHO... KISSED ME..

SORRY, WHAT'D YOU SAY?

Your voice was too low

I CAN'T RELAX...! I HATE IT...!! !! ABSOLUTELY! HATE-

THAT OX GIRL SMOTHERS ME TO DEATH!

I'M DRAGGED EVERYWHERE AND THROWN INTO ALL KINDS OF LOOPS BECAUSE OF YOUR CURIOSITY...!

WHA-WHAT I'M TRYING TO SAY IS! IF I STAY HERE, I'M FED FOOD WITH MYSTERIOUS INGREDIENTS ..!

UM, SORRY...

SHE'S TERRIFIED...

Well, I can't blame her when she was being touched that much

There there there

Fur

BY. . BY THE WAY, IS THAT OX GIRL. COMING TODAY. ?

I MIGHT START SCRATCHING TO DE-STRESS...

GYAAAAH!! DON'T DO THAT!!! ANYTHING BUT THAT!!

I WONDER WHAT AYAKA'S UP TO TODAY...

I THINK SHE SAID SHE'S DOING OGRE EXTERMINATION TODAY, TOO...

HUFF...

I THINK THAT'S IT...

はぁ...

はぁ...?

SHEESH...

I WANNA TAKE A BATH...

N... NICE ONE, SANA-CHAN. YA REALLY SAVED ME.
WAH!

YOKAI EXTERMINATION ISN'T OVER UNTIL YOU'RE HOME!

LACKADAISICALLY COMPLAINING THAT YOU WANT TO TAKE A BATH ON THE BATTLEFIELD!?

WHY DO YOU LET YOUR GUARD DOWN SO EASILY, SENPAI!?

...WHY...

YOU SHOULD TAKE THIS MORE SERIOUSLY...

.....!

BESIDES, LOOK.

I'M ALL INEXACT AND CAREFREE, AND YOU'RE METICULOUS AND DETAIL-ORIENTED. WE'RE A GREAT TEAM, RIGHT?

I THINK WE'RE DOIN' FINE.

ISN'T THAT JUST TURNING A BLIND EYE TO THE PROBLEM...?

YES, BUT...

NO MATTER HOW GREAT THE ENEMY MIGHT BE, IF IT'S AKAYA-SENPAI...

...BY THE WAY,

YOU...

...AMAZING,

AN OPPONENT THIS SIZE... EVEN MY SISTER WOULD HAVE HAD DIFFICULTY IN BATTLE.

WH—

BACK IN THE INCIDENT WITH THE HATEFUL CAT,

WHY DID YOU LIE TO ME...?

"OH NO! A TUNNEL! IT'S A TUNNEL! OH-OH NO! I'M LOSING THE SIGNAL! THE SIGNAL! CLICK!" WHO'D BELIEVE A LIE LIKE THAT...?

And ya actually said the word "click"

SHE'S A TERRIBLE LIAR, AS ALWAYS...

WH-WH-WHAT ARE Y-Y-YOU SA-SA-SAYING?

WHAT D-D-DO YOU MEAN, L-L-LIE TO Y-Y-YOU?

EVERYONE KNOWS THERE'S NO STOPPING AYAKA-SENPAI WHEN IT'S ABOUT NEKUNI-SENPAI...!

NO, SANA...! YOU ABSOLUTELY HAVE TO KEEP IT A SECRET...!

I'LL LOOK IT UP ON THE INTERNET WHEN I GET HOME TO SEE IF I CAN FIND ANYTHING. MAYBE THIS HAPPENS A LOT...

※

WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO...?

BUT IF SHE FINDS OUT THAT THEY KISSED, UNIMAGINABLE DISASTER WILL STRIKE...!!

IT'S BAD ENOUGH THAT THERE'S SOMETHING GOING ON BETWEEN NEKUNI-SENPAI AND THE HATEFUL CAT...

Unimaginable disaster

?

I'M GOING TO STOP BY THE LIBRARY BEFORE I GO HOME AND SEE IF I CAN FIND SOME REFERENCE MATERIAL...!

※

THAT POKE

WHAT'S WITH

AND NEKUNI-SENPAI, TOO... WHAT IF HIS FAMILY FINDS OUT THAT THERE'S SOMETHING GOING ON WITH THE CAT... WHAT DO I DO...?

...!? SENPAI...?

...IT'S OKAY, SANA-CHAN... I ALREADY KNOW...

NOT LYING!

WHAT IS IT, SENPAI!? I'M NOT LYING!

HYES!? WHA...

HEY, SANA-CHAN,

HERE LIES A YOKAI WHO EXHAUSTED ITS ENERGY BY BECOMING THOROUGHLY LOST IN A FOREIGN LAND.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO ANSWER THE PHONE IF YOU'RE IN THE BATHROOM...

HUH?

I MEAN... YES...

PHEW...! I'M GLAD SENPAI ISN'T THAT SHARP...!

TH... THEN, DO YOU REMEMBER WHICH JURISDICTION OF THE TWELVE FAMILIES YOU CAME FROM?

...? JURISDIC-TION...?

IT WAS BETWEEN TWO TALL BUILDINGS... AND... THERE WAS A BUCKET LYING AROUND...

UH... UM, THERE WERE TALL BUILDINGS...?

...ARE YOU SURE YOU REMEMBER THE PATH YOU TOOK...?

THAT'S AN ALLEY, ISN'T IT?

THE LAND IS DIVIDED INTO TWELVE JURISDICTIONS, AND THEY'RE SOMETIMES REFERRED TO BY THE ANIMAL THAT'S THE FIRST LETTER OF THE GOVERNER'S SURNAME.

RAT
OX
TIGER
RABBIT
DRAGON
SNAKE
HORSE
GOAT
MONKEY
ROOSTER
DOG
PIG

THEY'RE BASICALLY LANDLORDS.

SO... TWELVE TOWN IS GOVERNED BY THE TWELVE FAMILIES...

LET'S TAKE A BREAK AND EAT SOMETHING. MY TREAT.

IF YOU KNEW, WE COULD'VE NARROWED IT DOWN... OH WELL.

I-I'M FINE...

JUST EAT BY YOURSE-

<

Like what I wear

I'M LIKE THAT WITH OTHER THINGS, TOO... BUT...

I'LL REPAY YOU EVENTJALLY...

YOU'RE NOT TRYNG ANYTH.NG NEW AT ALL, THAT'S JUST LIKE YOU...

TAIYAKI AND MILK...

SHJ... SHUT JP.

.....

HATING AND OWING ARE... JNRELATED...

THAT'S NOT SOMETHING SOMEONE WHO'S SUPPOSED TO HATE ME NEEDS TO BE WORRED ABOUT

.....

THAT'S THE KARUPIRU GINGER DRINK THAT I ORDERED...

What the heck is that!?

!?

A-ARE YOU ALRIGHT, NATSUHO...!?

WHAT-

COUGH HACK

!?

!??

OH,

...ARE YOU OKAY WITH THAT?

Knowing your personality

IF I DRINK THIS, IT'LL BE AN INDIRECT KISS...

HE... HEY, NATSUMO, WHOA!?

COUGH COUGH

I A- TAKE IT BACK...

FLASHBACK TRIGGERED BY THE WORD "KISS"

あ

BJT YOU REALLY DO AVOID TRYING OUT NEW THINGS, DON'T YOU...

YOU MIGHT LIKE A NEW DRINK IF YOU'D JJST TRY IT, YOU KNOW?

YOU'D... GO THAT FAR...!?

GAH!

I hate you

I hate you

I hate you

I hate you

ゆ゛

BUT...

I'M SCARED OF TRYING SOMETHING NEW AND FAILING...

10%

MAYBE THIS HAPPENS TO HER ALL THE TIME.

...WELL, I GUESS SHE DOES LOOK LIKE A NICE GIRL, AND SHE'S CUTE, TOO...

Poor her

AAAAHHHHHH

HUH?

AND SHE'S GETTING DRAGGED INTO SOMETHING..

I JUST TOOK MY EYES OFF OF HER FOR A SECOND...

Are they trying to pick her up?

SHE'S WITH ME, SORRY.

UHHH, 'SCUSE ME.

OH, SHE'S TAKEN?

The cute girls always are

S-SORRY, COME ON, LET'S GO.

THAT'S THE HEAD OF THE NEKJNI FAMILY, ISN'T IT? YOJ HAVE TO BE CAREFJL.

WHAT'RE YOU GETTING WORKED JP FOR?

NEKUNI...?

OH,

HE HELPED ME AGAIN...

OKAY... UH...

...IT'S ALRIGHT NOW, NATSJHO.

HE MIGHT BE THE HEAD, BUT HE'S JUST A FAILURE.

YOU DON'T NEED TO BE SCARED OF HIM.

"FAILURE"...?

IS... IT SOMETHING... I SHOULDN'T... HAVE ASKED?

UM... I MEAN...

HM?

OH, THAT "FAILURE" THING?

WH...

WHAT DID HE...

NAH, IT'S OKAY. I'M USED TO IT.

WELL, I DIDN'T.

SO YOU KNOW THAT THE HEADS OF THE TWELVE FAMILIES ALL INHERIT SPECIAL ABILITIES, RIGHT?

SO I DON'T REALLY HAVE A COUNTER-ARGUMENT WHEN PEOPLE CALL ME A FAILURE.

BUT I'VE BEEN DEALING WITH IT FOR... SEVEN YEARS? WHO WOULDN'T GET USED TO IT?

THERE ARE SOME PEOPLE WHO HECKLE ME ABOUT THAT,

After we cross that bridge, we'll take a turn.

I hope there aren't too many people

BUT...

HE WAS THE FAMILY HEAD AND WAS ALLOWED SOME FREEDOM,

I THOUGHT HE WAS RECKLESS BECAUSE

SO WHY...

HE'S ALWAYS JUST DISMISSED WITH THE SIMPLE WORD "FAILURE" WITHOUT A THOUGHT,

TH... THAT'S...

WH... WHY DID YOU JUST STOP...

H... HWAT?

I half-ass

OW!

NO... MATTER HOW YOU LOOK AT IT, IT'S...

Y... YOU SHOULDN'T GO NEAR THAT...

BUT IT SAYS "SAVE ME"...

SO OBVI-OUS!!!

WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?

YOU CAN'T CALL YOURSELF A HUMAN... Anymore

IF YOU... FALL FOR... THAT,

Y... YOU SHOULDN'T..

SAVE ME

HEY
UM,
THAT'S
Ah—
I SAID,
NO,
DOESN'T AN OBVIOUS TRAP LIKE THAT MAKE YOU ALL THE MORE CURIOUS AND WANT TO TRIGGER IT...!?
His eyes are scary
WHAT IS HE EVEN SAYING?
Pie
A DIRECT ATTACK!!?
WHAT'S TAKING SO LONG!?
GAAAAAH!
Hahaha!
THAT'S AGAINST THE RULES!!
AAAA-AAGH!!
AGAINST THE RULES...?
TARO-CHAN, YOU'RE CRAZY!
Stop being so flirty, stupid!
WAHAHA! TAKE THAT!

BWAH!

THE WIND S STRONG, SO YOU SHOULDN'T BE ON THE HANDRAILS...

HEY... UM,

BUT HE'S JUST AN IDIOT...

I KNEW HE WAS RECKLESS...

あわわ

っっっ

SO WHY...

THE BRIDGE ISN'T REALLY THAT HIGH.

HE'S A KAPPA, SO HE PROBABLY WOULDN'T DROWN, EITHER.

DID MY BODY...

MGH!

OH NO!

THREE WAS TOO MANY...

Agnya!

WHY DID I...

WHY DID I SAVE SOMEONE I CAME HERE TO HATE...?

He wasn't saved!?

Taromaru

...SO. MANY THINGS HAVE HAPPENED SINCE I GOT NVOLVED WITH HIM.

Sigh

SORRY, NATSUHO...!

YOU SAVED ME...

BECAUSE I TOOK AN INTEREST IN HIM?

Bfwah!

What a landing

IS SOMETHING WEIRD HAPPENING TO ME

CAT EARS.

WHAT'S GOING ON WITH ME...

THEY... ALREADY FIGURED IT OUT..

SO, THE HATEFUL CAT?

PRO-BABLY.

I THINK SO.

YOKAI..?

OH-OH NO, MY EARS...

NOW THAT THEY KNOW THAT I'M A YOKAI THAT THEY SHOULDN'T BE AROUND, THEY'LL...

THESE KIDS KNOW ABOUT THE HATEFUL CAT...

OH NO... I BECAME INVOLVED, AND BLEW MY COVER...

JUMP AGAIN!! DO IT AGAIN! DO IT AGAIN!

YOU JUMPED SO HIGH!! SO HIGH!!

!??

WHOOOOOOA! THAT WAS SO COOOL!!

SO COOL!

!!?

ムホー

ムボー

HUH?

DO YOU WANT TO BE SCRATCHED ?

KNo. KNOCK IT OFF ALREADY .

IF-IF THEY KNOW ALREADY... THEN,

WH-WHAT? HUH...? WHAT'S HAPPENING...?

!??

Again! Again!

UH... HEY GUYS, TAKE IT EASY NOW.

Well, what did you think was going to happen

HEY, NO FAIR!

ME TOO, ME TOO!!

I WANNA DO IT! I WANNA DO IT, TOO!! TEACH ME!! PLEASE TEACH ME!!

AMA-ZING!

WHOOOOA! SHE TRANS-FOOORMED!!

...DON'T CRY...

...I'M NOT... CRYING.

GOT SMOTHERED... AGAIN...

I...

First that ox, and now.

THAT WASN'T SO BAD, WAS IT?

BUT, WELL,

NGH...

MM...

WAS I SMILING?

I don't know what it is, but I really hate you right now.

WH... WHAT? WHAT ARE YOU SMILING ABOUT...!?

HUH?

BUT SEE, YOU NEVER KNOW, RIGHT?

THERE ARE PEOPLE LIKE ME OUT THERE, WHO'D ASK YOU TO HATE THEM.

COME TO THINK OF IT...

I...

WAS ACTUALLY THINKING ABOUT THAT EARLIER...

WHEN I FIRST ATTACKED YOU... THIS IS... WHAT YOU SAID, RIGHT?

WHAT IF YOU DON'T TRY TO EXTERMINATE THE NEKUNI FAMILY,

AND JUST LET ME BEAR YOUR HATRED INSTEAD?

I JUST... WENT WITH THE FLOW AND DID WHAT YOU SAID...

BUT... SOMETHING SEEMS OFF...

AT FIRST I THOUGHT IT WAS BECAUSE YOU THOUGHT OF YOURSELF AS SOME SORT OF SELF-SACRIFICING SAINT..

BUT WHILE YOU'RE DEFINITELY GOOD WITH PEOPLE, YOU'RE TOO HONEST ABOUT YOUR OWN GREED.

HAVE SOME OTHER GOAL IN ASKING ME TO DO THAT...?

...DID YOU...

...WELL, IT'S NOT SO MUCH A GOAL, BUT IT'S SOMETHING I HAVE TO DO FOR MYSELF.

WELL, IF YOU FIGURED IT OUT ALREADY, THERE'S NO POINT KEEPING IT FROM YOU.

THERE'S SOMEONE I WANT TO KICK OFF OF HIS PEDESTAL TO THE POINT THAT I WISH HE'D JUST DIE ALREADY.

HIS VOICE... IS IT LOWER THAN USUAL...?

SO A FAILURE THAT CAN'T DO ANYTHING LIKE ME HAS NOTHING ON HIM.

I DON'T LIKE THE WAY HE DOES THINGS, BUT HE DOES FULFILL HIS DUTIES,

I DON'T THINK I SHOULD HAVE THE RIGHT TO EVEN VOICE MY COMPLAINTS TO HIM.

THAT'S WHY WHEN YOU ATTACKED ME, I THOUGHT

THAT IF I CAN'T EVEN BEAR THE BURDEN OF THE HATE TOWARDS THE NEKUNI FAMILY BY MYSELF, I WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO FIGHT ON EQUAL TERMS.

IF CAN'T AT LEAST DO THAT,

JUST WHAT KIND OF PERSON WOULD MAKE HIM SAY ALL THOSE THINGS...?

SHEESH, SO THAT'S WHERE YA WENT...

...THAT WAS HONESTLY SURPRISING

I DIDN'T THINK HE HAD IT IN HIM TO HATE ANYONE...

What!? It's already sundown?

YOU'RE ALWAYS RUNNIN' AROUND EVERYWHERE...!!

REALLY, KYOICHI-SAN...

はぁ...

はぁ...

OH?

WHO'S SHE...?

WHY ARE YOU ANSWERING IN FRENCH, YOU IDIOT!?

O... OUI...

AND JUST FOLLOW THAT ROAD, OKAY?

UM, I WAS GIVING HER DIRECTIONS... ANYWAY, YOU TAKE A RIGHT OVER THERE,

LOOK FOR THE PATH I TOOK TO GET INTO THE CITY, AND THEN COME BACK TO YOUR PLACE...

I... I'M GOING TO...

OTHERWISE MY SECRET JEALOUSY IS..!

NO..! THAT'S NOT THAT REACTION I WANTED! YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE FLUSTERED..!

HM? YEAH, I GUESS SO.

I-idiot! She was just asking for directions! It's not like that!

IDEA.

GOT IT.

WAS CUTE... LIKE A LITTLE GIRL, WASN'T SHE?

SHE...

WILL SHE BE ALRIGHT BY HERSELF...?

WELL, OF COURSE.

DO YA REALLY THINK I'D LEAVE YA BY YOURSELF IF THE HATEFUL CAT WERE INSIDE NEKUNI?

BJT ANYWAY, IT'S DANGEROUS FOR YOU TO GO OUT ALONE!

EVEN IF THE HATEFUL CAT RAN AWAY INTO THE TATSUKAWA FAMILY'S MOUNTAINS...

WOW, I CAN ACTUALLY SEE HER FOLLOWING THROUGH WITH THAT.

why are you sticking your chest out?

...HUH?

IT'S NOT INSIDE NEKUNI...?

UM... ANYWAY, KYOICHI-SAN...

...SO DID SOMEONE MADE A MISTAKE THINKING THEY SAW HER BUT THEY ACTUALLY DIDN'T ..?

I CAME TO PICK YOU UP...

Are you ready?

NEKUNI FAMILY MAIN HOUSE

I SENT YA A TEXT SAYIN' I'D COME PICK YA UP...!

LIKE I SAID...!

L...

DIDN'T HAVE TO FORCE YOURSELF TO COME IF YA DIDN'T WANT TO...

UM... YA KNOW, KYO CHI-SAN, YA...

...I KNOW.

YA ALWAYS DO THAT...

Do ya even know what a cellphone's for?

I SAID I'M SORRY... I LEFT MY CELLPHONE AT HOME...

OH,

.....

THE LAST THING I WANT IS HIM THINKING I RAN AWAY INSTEAD OF FACING HIM.

OH... NO, PLEASE...

YOU HAVE MY THANKS.

AND USHIGURA, MY YOUNGER SISTER SANA IS ALWAYS UNDER YOUR CARE.

INUHARA FAMILY HEAD

SEN INUHARA

SEN-SAN, IT'S BEEN A WHILE!

I'M PLEASED TO SEE YOU AGAIN, KYOICHI-SAMA.

WAIT... KYOICHI-SAN, PLEASE CALM DOWN...!

WHAT TOOK YOU SO LONG, YOU GODDAMN SCUM?

PLEASE, ENTER...

KYOICHI-SAMA, GOICHI-SAMA IS WAITING FOR YOU INSIDE.

OH... I'M SORRY...

USHIGURA... WHY DON'T YOU CALM DOWN A BIT?

I WONDER IF KYOICHI-SAN IS ALRIGHT...

チラ

チラ

AWKWARD SILENCE.

I HONESTLY DON'T KNOW HOW I SHOULD ACT AROUND HER

...SO,

WHAT DID YOU CALL ME FOR...?

SANA-CHAN'S OLDER SISTER...

HER SKILL WITH THE SWORD FAR SURPASSES EVEN SANA-CHAN'S... BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY...

GOICHI NEKUNI

GRAMPS... I MEAN,

FORMER HEAD OF THE NEKUNI FAMILY, GOICHI NEKUNI-SAMA...

WOULD YOU RATHER HAVE ME ADDRESS YOU RESPECTFULLY LIKE THAT?

NO. THAT'S DISGUSTING.

HUMPH...

FT... BAHA...

I CALLED FOR YOU BECAUSE

I WANTED TO ASK YOU WHY THE HATEFUL CAT IS STILL ALIVE.

THE CAT CAME FIVE DAYS AGO.

ACCORDING TO USHIGURA, IT'S BEEN ABOUT THREE DAYS SINCE IT MADE CONTACT WITH YOJ.

IF YOU'RE NOT DEAD EVEN AFTER THAT,

IT MEANS YOU LET IT GO OR YOU DID SOMETHING SOFT AND MUSHY AND WERE LET GO, AM I WRONG?

...THAT'S RIGHT...

HEY, I'M ASKING IF I WAS WRONG. DID YOU HEAR ME?

DID YOU FORGET TO BRING YOUR EARS?

IF YOU DO THAT, WE'LL DROP THIS WHOLE THING.

NEXT TIME YOU COME IN CONTACT WITH IT, LET JS KNOW. WE'LL KILL IT ONE WAY OR ANOTHER AND TAKE CARE OF IT.

BJT NOW THAT IT'S STUCK TS PAWS IN HERE, WE HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO KILL IT OFF FOR GOOD.

UNTIL NOW, WE LEFT IT ALONE BECAUSE IT WAS COWERING IN FEAR IN THE MOUNTAINS,

...IT'S A PEST THAT HATES AND BRING HARM TO HUMANS.

...YOU'RE GOING TO KILL IT?

BECAJSE YOU, A FAILURE THAT CAN'T DO ANYTHING, KEEP BEING SOFT,

I HAVE TO CLEAN JP AFTER YOUR MESS. DON'T FORGET THAT.

DO YOU KNOW WHAT A COWARDLY RAT LIKE THAT IS CALLED?

BUT ONCE YOU REAL ZE YOUR POSITION, YOU COWER AND WITHER AWAY

..YOU'RE ALWAYS LIKE THIS USUALLY YOU'RE ALL LIGHT-HEARTED AND LOAFING AROUND EVERYWHERE,

BUT-

USUALLY THE CONVERSATION WOULD END HERE.

I DON'T CARE IF I'M A CORNERED RAT, OR A FAILURE...

BUT THERE ARE STILL THINGS I CAN DO.

A CORNERED RAT.

IF YOU'RE JUST A CORNERED RAT THAT CAN'T DO ANYTHING, THE LEAST YOU CAN DO IS DO WHAT YOU'RE TOLD TO DO.

I'M TELLING YOU

THAT I ABSOLUTELY DESPISE THE WAY YOU DO THINGS!

OR A COMPLAINT, I'LL SAY IT TO YOUR FACE...!

THAT'S WHY EVEN IF IT'S SOMETHING NAIVE AND SOFT,

YOU JUST ASSUME AND CAST YOUR JUDGMENT EVEN THOUGH YOU'VE NEVER INTERACTED WITH THEM,

YOU NEVER TAKE AN INTEREST IN WHO YOU'RE DEALING WITH, OR TRY TO GET TO KNOW THEM,

AND JUST ERASE THEM.

はぁ？

UNTIL NOW, YOU WERE JUST A COWERING, CORNERED RAT...!

KAH KAKAKAH! WHAT THE HELL?

KUH...

SOMETHING FUNNY'S HAPPENING HERE.

KAKAKAH...! NOW THIS IS FUNNY.

ARE YOU FINALLY SHOWING SOME NERVE? HUH?

BUT WHEN DID YOU LEARN HOW TO TALK...?

KYOICHI?

DON'T YOU THINK SO,

……

ｴｯ…

MY BODY… WON'T MOVE…

YOU BASTARD…!!

LOWER YOUR DAMN HEAD.

YOU HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN WHY I HAVE THIS ABILITY, RIGHT?

HEY, KYOICHI.

EXECUTION OF ENFORCEMENT...!

HEY,

WORDS BECOME IMBUED WITH POWER AND FORCE THE TARGET TO CARRY OUT THE ORDER, NO MATTER WHAT IT MIGHT BE...!

DON'T YOU...?

YOU DO REMEMBER WHY YOU BECAME A FAILURE,

ORDINARILY, IT'S AN ABILITY ONLY THE CURRENT HEAD OF THE NEKUNI FAMILY CAN USE.

YOU HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN THAT YOU AS GOOD AS KILLED THEM, HAVE YOU...!?

WHAT YOU COULDN'T DO BACK THEN,

AND WHY YOUR PARENTS DIED...!!

YOU HAVE A BAD HABIT OF BEING QUICK TO LOSE YOUR TEMPER.

WHEN... DID SHE DRAW HER SWORD...!?

EVEN IF THAT HAPPENS TO BE A FRIEND OF MY SISTER,

I'VE BEEN GIVEN ORDERS TO CUT DOWN ANYONE WHO INTERFERES WITH GOICHI-SAMA.

I WILL CUT THEM DOWN WITHOUT HESITATION.

KYOICHI-SAN...!!

...YES, IF THIS IS HOW IT'LL BE, THERE'S NO OTHER CHOICE...

OR...

...?

IF YOU'RE BEING THIS REBELLIOUS, I CAN'T JUST LEAVE THIS TO YOU...

BUT WHAT DO I DO NOW...?

THAT FAMILIAR BUCKET...

THAT FAMILIAR ALLEY...!

I FINALLY FOUND IT...!

LOST FOR FIVE HOURS →

MAYBE IT WOULD HELP TEACH YOU A LESSON

IF I ORDERED YOU TO KILL THE CAT.

OW!

...I THINK

THE CITY BORDER IS RIGHT AROUND HERE...

...NO...

AN... INVISIBLE WALL? IS THIS THE BARRIER...?

OW...

HOT... JGH...

OH?

WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

THERE'S NO OTHER WAY TO GET HOME...

WHERE... ARE YOU...

.....

DO YOU GET IT?

THIS DOESN'T MAKE ANY SENSE.

HE KNOWS I'M A CAT...?

WHY'RE YOU TRYING TO COME THROUGH HERE, LITTLE KITTY?

!??

WH... WHO'S THERE?

THERE WE GO.

I WAS ACTJALLY HID NG OUT OF CONSIDERATION FOR YOU...

...SHEESH.

SHEESH, YOU'RE SUCH A HASSLE, LITTLE KITTY.

SEE, I KNEW THIS WOULD HAPPEN... YEAH.

.....!

W-WAH...! WH... WHO ARE YOU...!?

HERE, I'M OVER HERE.

.....

Y... YOU'RE THE ONE...

HEY, LITTLE KITTY.
LOOKS LIKE THIS PATH I TAUGHT YOU'S BEEN BLOCKED OFF FOR A WHILE.
DIDN'T YOU KNOW?

THEN THAT'S...

...IF-IF THAT'S ALL YOU WANT...

.....

...SO YEAH, LITTLE KITTY.

IF YOU GO FIN SH JP THE LITTLE ERRAND I JUST ASKED YOU TO DO,

I'LL TELL YOU ANOTHER WAY YOU CAN RETURN HOME.

TO THIS CITY...?

BE... BEFORE I CAME...

DO YOU REMEMBER SOMETHING FROM R GHT BEFORE YOU CAME TO THIS CITY?

..OH, BEFORE THAT, LITTLE KITTY,

YEP.

GOOOOD, GOOD... THAT'S HOW IT SHOULD BE...

WHAT...? WHAT DID HE JUST...

HUH...?

MAYBE I'LL GO BUY A BOOK TO PASS SOME TIME BEFORE GOING TO BED.

BUT NOW I'M SO HYPED UP, I MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO SLEEP.

STUFF LIKE THIS ISN'T MY FORTE, BUT IF I PUT MY MIND INTO IT, I CAN DO IT, TOO.

...YEP! GREAT, GREAT.

WELL THEN,

I DON'T WANNA BE HATED BY YOU,

SO SEE YA, LITTLE KITTY.

恨み来、恋、恨み恋。ヒラ

CHAPTER 3: THE CAT'S REPAYMENT

THE HATEFUL CAT IS A PEST THAT SHOULD BE EXTERMINATED.

I'D LOVE TO WATCH A CORNERED RAT LIKE YOU BITE BACK AT A CAT...

IF YOU WON'T DO IT, I'LL JUST ORDER YOU.

NO MATTER HOW HARD IT TRIES TO LIVE AS A HUMAN, IT HAS A NATURAL INSTINCT.

SOONER OR LATER, IT'LL LOSE CONTROL AND INDISCRIMINATELY HATE AND KILL SOMEONE.

.....!

I CAN'T... MOVE A MUSCLE...

...

USHIGURA.

KYOICHI-SA...

MY, MY.

WILL YA LET ME THROUGH, PLEASE?

YOU YOUNGSTERS SHOULDN'T GET YOUR BLOOD BOILING SO QUICK.

A KID?

I'M SAYING YOU'RE IN MY WAY.

...YOUNG MAN,

I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU GOT IN, BUT IF YOU INSIST ON INTERFERING...

NO WONDER.

...OH, I GET IT.

HEY, SEN, IF YOU CAN'T EVEN OBEY A SIMPLE ORDER LIKE THAT, I'M GOING TO HAVE TO TEACH YOU A THING OR TWO AGAIN...

HEY, NEKJNI, SORRY TO INTERRUPT...

...BJT WHERE'S THE LOO?

Can't hold it much longer

TATSUGA FAMILY HEAD

YUZEN TATSUGA

SORRY, BUT I HAVE SOME BUSINESS WITH THIS GEEZER HERE. DON'T BE LOWERING YOUR HEAD LIKE THAT, JUST HEAD ON HOME.

.....!?

THE LOO.

Want me to piss here instead?

...THE WHAT?

OH?

WHAT DID YOU COME HE—

OH! WELL IF IT ISN'T LITTLE KYO!

...UNDER-STOOD.

HE'S MY FRIEND, NOT AN ENEMY. SHOW HIM WHERE THE LOO IS.

...SEN,

Isn't this house a little too big?

あーよ

...! THE EXECUTION OF ENFORCEMENT WAS UNDONE...?

TH... THANK YOU?

Have we met before?

WE'LL TALK ABOUT THIS CAT THING ANOTHER TIME. GET OUTTA MY SIGHT.

SO THAT'S HOW IT IS.

DAMN IT, HE JUST DOES WHATEVER HE WANTS...

BUT NOT TAKING THE LEAST BIT OF INTEREST IN ANOTHER,

AND CALLOUSLY MAKING DECISIONS WITHOUT A SECOND THOUGHT IS WRONG...!

WOULDN'T BE GIVEN AJTHORITY OR POWER AS THE HEAD.

...OF COURSE A FAILURE LIKE ME

I DON'T NEED AN ABILITY LIKE THAT, BUT I *WILL* TAKE BACK THE HEAD'S AUTHORITY AND POWER FROM YOU...!

I'LL KNOCK YOU OFF YOUR HIGH HORSE SOON ENOUGH, SO JUST WAIT RIGHT THERE...!!

WHAT KIND OF ATTITUDE IS THAT TOWARDS YER OLD FRIEND?

WAH-HAHA!

What sake is this?

...IF YOU'RE JUST HERE TO GET FREE SAKE, LEAVE.

KAAH!

NOW THAT'S THE *GOOD* STUFF!

IF YOU KEEP GETTING ANGRY, YOU'LL GO BALD.

WAH-HAHAH!

YOU'RE AN EMBAR-RASSMENT.

AS IF YOU'D GET ANGRY FROM MY ATTITUDE.

TOO BAD FOR YOU, THERE HASN'T BEEN ANYONE BALD IN MY FAMILY SINCE MY GRAMPS' TIME.

BUT IT NEVER DID.

...

THE REPORTS SAY THE HATEFUL CAT ESCAPED TO THE TATSUGA FAMILY'S MOUNTAINS,

WELL THEN, LET'S GET TO THE MAIN TOPIC.

SO EITHER SOMEONE IS LYING THAT THEY SAW THE CAT,

OR THEY THOUGHT THEY SAW IT, BUT IT WAS REALLY SOMETHING THAT ONLY LOOKED LIKE IT.

YEAH, I'VE STARTED TAKING CARE OF THE MOUNTAINS RECENTLY.

If it came into the mountains, I would have known

...YOU KNOW THAT FOR SURE?

YOU'RE SAYING...

THAT IT TRANS-FORMED...?

AND THE OGRES ARE BECOMING SO ACTIVE THAT WE'RE HAVING AN OGRE HJNT.

THE CAT THAT WAS HOLED UP IN THE MOUNTAINS SJDDENLY CAME HERE,

...HEY, NEKUNI, DON'T YOU THINK THERE'S BEEN A LOT GOING ON RECENTLY?

YOJ SHOULD WATCH OUT FOR YOURSELF, AT THE VERY LEAST.

THERE HAS TO BE SOMEONE PULLING THE STRINGS.

AND NOW THIS MISINFORMATION... NO MATTER HOW I LOOK AT IT...

HAH.

AS IF I SHOULD SHOW ANY COMPASSION TO A USELESS FAILURE.

AND EVEN THEN, HE STILL HAS THE NERVE TO TAKE AN ATTITJDE WITH ME.

BJT I CAN'T SAY I FEEL GOOD WATCHING YOU TORMENT YOURS.

NEKJNI, I DON'T HAVE A GRANDSON,

WELL THEN, I'LL BE LEAVING NOW.

...YOU'VE CHANGED.

YOU USED TO BE MORE DRIVEN BY YOUR EMOTIONS.

SHEESH.

SHRIVEL UP AND DIE, IDIOT.

SHUT UP.

REMEMBER WHEN YOUR FIRST SON WAS BORN? THE SIGHT OF YOU BREAKING DOWN WAS QUITE SOMETHING.

That gave me a good laugh

SO YOU JUST SAY WHATEVER YOU WANT...

THE EXECJT ON OF ENFORCEMENT DOESN'T WORK ON YOU,

A MAN... CHANGES WHETHER HE WANTS TO OR NOT.

YOU'VE CHANGED.

WHETHER YOU FALL LEFT OR RIGHT, YOU'LL CHANGE. THAT'S JUST OBVIOUS.

HE NEEDS TO KICK THE BUCKET ALREADY...

THAT DAMN GEEZER...

THERE'S ABSOLUTELY NO WAY HE'D FALL FOR THAT.

He's not you Kyoichi-san

I'LL LAY OUT A POISONED BUN FOR HIM.

OH, I KNOW!

A master plan!

DO NOT EAT

OH, BY THE WAY, THANKS FOR EARLIER, AKAYA.

HUH?

DON'T YOU THINK YOU'RE THE STRANGE ONE FOR NOT CHANGING AT ALL...

ZEN-CHAN?

YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED AT ALL WITH THAT.

AGAIN?

I JUST COULDN'T STOP MYSELF FROM GETTIN' ANGRY...

N... NO,

YOU WANTED TO HELP ME, AND THAT MADE SEN-SAN DRAW HER SWORD, RIGHT?

THIS IS MY DAUGHTER, AKAYA. SHE'S BEEN ASSIGNED AS YOUR BODYGUARD NOW THAT YOU'VE BECOME A HEAD.

KYOICHI-KUN,

WAS IT SIX YEARS AGO?

SHE'S STILL YOUNG, BUT SHE'S SKILLED...

AND YOU'RE ABOUT THE SAME AGE AS HER, SO I'M SURE YOU'LL GET ALONG NICELY.

NICE TO... MEET YOU.

COME ON, AKAYA. INTRODUCE YOURSELF.

NICE TA...

I mean,

I KNEW I WOULDN'T GET A DECENT BODYGUARD, ANYWAY.

I UNDERSTAND THAT IT WAS MY GRANDFATHER'S DECISION, AND I HAVE NO COMPLAINTS.

...IT DOESN'T MATTER.

PUTTING A GIRL ABOUT THE SAME AGE AS ME AS MY BODYGUARD...

Hun? What's this sound? Where's this draft of air coming from?

Come on, Kyoichi-kun, you don't have to be so down on yourself.

BESIDES, THE OX CLAN ARE ALL REALLY LAID-BACK, RIGHT?

I CAN TELL THAT THIS IS ALL FOR SHOW.

THINGAH!

I CAN'T SEE HOW SHE'D BE ABLE TO DO ANY—

YOU'RE A DAUGHTER OF THE OX CLAN, AREN'T YOU?

OH, SHEESH...

What do I do with you?

Spare

A...
A-A-
A-A-
AYAKA...

!!!

Don't ask if you can kill him after killing him!

Should I kill him?

DADDY, DOESN'T THIS KID MAKE YA MAD?

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トキオン

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YOU'RE LIKE AN ANGRY BULL...

He made me mad.

I couldn't help it

OOOH...

BACK THEN...

AND HOLD ON A SECOND. DON'T BRING UP MY DARK HISTORY LIKE IT'S NOTHING..!!

A LITTLE!? THAT WAS A LITTLE!?

THERE WAS A KID WHO JUST ASSUMED EVERYTHIN' AND KEPT TAKING OUT HIS MOODINESS ON EVERYONE AROUND HIM, SO I GOT A LITTLE...

I got carried away

Just a little

I'M GONNA HAVE TO STOP YOU RIGHT THERE.

I'VE EVEN LEARN-TA TALK PROPERLY TO HIGHER-STANDIN' PEOPLE, YA KNOW?

I DO THINK I'VE CHANGED, THOUGH...

MM... BUT...

I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW WHAT I WAS THINKING ANYMORE..

I GOT ALL HOT-HEADED, AND...

<!!

LIKE WHEN YOU WERE ATTACKED BY THE CAT,

SO I DON'T THINK YOU REALLY NEED TO WORRY SO MJCH...

WELL, YOU'VE GOTTEN A LOT BETTER SINCE THEN WITH HOW YOU CONDUCT YOURSELF,

WHEN I THINK OF THINGS LIKE THAT, I JUST REALIZE HOW LITTLE I'VE CHANGED...

!?

?

IF YOU KEEP YOUR HAND IN A POSITION WHERE YOU CAN PUNCH SOMEONE RIGHT AWAY, OF COURSE YOU'D LOSE CONTROL OF YOURSELF.

SEE, YOU'RE CLENCHING YOUR FIST TOO MUCH.

...AKAYA, LET ME SEE YOUR HAND.

HJH? WH-WHY...?

JUST LET ME SEE IT.

HERE, TRY SQUEEZING MY HAND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.

キュ

A... ARE YOU SURE...?

IF I USE ALL MY STRENGTH... IT MIGHT HURT...

I... I MEAN, KYOICHI-SAN...

HM?

I... I SEE...

HUH? ISN'T THIS THE POSITION FOR WHEN YOU'D WANT TO COMPARE STRENGTH?

WHA... WHA-WHA-WHAT... ARE YOU... THE WAY WERE HOLDIN' OUR HANDS... IS...

WHY DON'T YOU IMAGINE HOLDING SOMEONE'S HAND WHEN YOU SUDDENLY GET ANGRY?

SEE, YOU KNOW TO HOLD BACK IN A SITUATION LIKE THIS.

'KAY?

K...
'KAY...

...UH,

UM,

...?

...CAN THAT HAND...

BE...

YOURS... KYOICHI-SAN..?

PLEASE FORGET WHAT I JUST SAID!

OH, UM,

You're kinda embarrassing me

UM... SURE, IT'S JJST YOUR IMAGINATION, SO... SURE...?

WHY CAN I ONLY SAY THINGS LIKE THAT IN A ROUNDABOUT WAY...?

HE USED TO BE SO CYNICAL, BUT NOW HE'S SO EASY-GOING AND FUN.

ぽち

...KYOICHI-SAN CHANGED A LOT.

TO SOMEONE LIKE A COW, MORE EASY-GOIN', WHO WOULDN'T MAKE MY PAPA AND MAMA WORRY...

AND IT GAVE ME HOPE THAT MAYBE SOMEONE LIKE ME WHO ACTS LIKE A FIGHTIN' BULL CAN CHANGE SOMEDAY, TOO.

I'VE ALWAYS THOUGHT THAT THAT WAS SO AMAZIN',

AND BECOME A-CUTER, MORE GIRLY-GIRL...

THAT'S...!!

...

I THOUGHT YOU WERE IN TATSUGA, HATEFUL CAT.

THAT'S THE DIRECTION OF KYOICHI-SAN'S HOUSE...!

IT'S NOTHING LIKE BEFORE...

IF YOU ARE GOING TO INTERFERE, I WILL SHOW YOU NO MERCY.

.....!?

WHAT..? THIS OVER-WHELMING PRESSURE...?

THE ELDEST DAUGHTER OF THE OX CLAN.

YOU.

I WILL SHOW YOU JUST HOW FOOLISH AND LAUGHABLE YOU ARE

FOR PROTECTING THAT COWARDLY, SCHEMING RAT...!

WHEN YOU SUDDENLY GET ANGRY...

SAY THAT TO MY FACE, ONE MORE TIME...

WHY YA...

IMAGINE HOLDING SOME-ONE'S HAND.

.....

I JUST GOT DONE TALKIN' WITH KYOICHI-SAN ABOUT THAT..

BUT I WAS JUST ABOUT TO THROW THIS AGAIN...

I CAN'T HOLD BACK HERE.

BUT THEN,

EVEN IF I CAN'T BECOME A CUTER, GIRLIER GIRL,

EVEN IF I CAN'T CHANGE WHO I AM,

YOU CAN THINK IT FOOLISH OR WHATEVER, BUT I'M THE HEAD OF THE USHIGURA FAMILY...!

IF YOU WANT TO GET TO KYOICHI-SAN, YOU'LL HAVE TO GET THROUGH ME FIRST!!

THERE ARE CONVICTIONS I REFUSE TO GIVE UP!

USHIGURA...!!

KNOW YOUR PLA(E...

IS YOU!

HAH...!

THE ONE WHO SHOULD KNOW THEIR PLACE...

KYAH!

FROM THIS DISTANCE..! IS IT...!?

TIME—

ITS POWER IS ON A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT LEVEL FROM LAST...

SO HEAVY!?

.....!!?

SO STRONG...!!?

NGAAAAH!!

...!! I'M FALLI—

WAS IT NOT FIGHTIN' SERIOUS LAST TIME...!?

IT'S WAY STRONGER THAN ME...

WAH!

HYAH!!

BUT...

I CAN'T BACK DOWN HERE...

SAND...!? NO, IS IT ASPHALT...!?

!

HAH!

NO MATTER WHAT KIND OF MONSTER YOU ARE, IF I DECAPITATE YOU...!!

IT'S NOT ABOUT WHAT WAS INSIDE THE BAGS...!

IT'S OVER...!!

WHA...

"NO... NO WAY...

IT SPROUTED ANOTHER HEAD IN AN INSTANT! WHAT KIND OF SORCERY IS...!

IT'S NOT JUST ANY YOKAI...

KAH!

...GAH!

...GAH!

YOU'RE A FOOL WHO VALUES THE HONOR OF YOUR FAMILY OVER YOUR OWN LIFE... OR PERHAPS YOU'RE JUST A WRETCHED FOOL.

...SURELY YOU MUST HAVE REALIZED THE OVERWHELMING DIFFERENCE IN OUR STRENGTHS WHILE WE FOUGHT

AND YET YOU DID NOT RUN.

IF I HAD TO CHOOSE ONE OF THE TWO, I'D SAY I'M A WRETCHED FOOL, BUT...

IT'S NOT HONOR OR SOME... COUGH, SOMETHIN' GRAND LIKE THAT...

HA... COUGH COUGH, AH... HAHAH.

I DON'T KNOW IF YOU HAVE EMOTIONS LIKE THAT,

IT'S WORSE THAN JUST BEING A WRETCHED FOOL.

キ…

MY REASON IS COMPLETELY WHIMSICAL

AND SELF-CENTERED.

BUT IF YOU DID, YOU WOULDN'T ACCUSE ME OF BEING JUST A WRETCHED FOOL...!

DIS

!!!

JUMP

SHE DESTROYED MY FOOTING..!?

THAT OX WOULDN'T RUN...

WHERE WILL SHE COME FROM...?

ABOVE...!!

THE SOUND OF SOMETHING SPINNING IN THE AIR...?

ヒュオ

I'M AWKWARD, AND CAN'T EXPRESS MYSELF.

EVEN NOW, I HAD TO SAY IT IN A ROUNDABOUT WAY,

THAT I KNOW TO BE TRUE, CLEAR AS THE SKY...!

ゴオ……

BUT I HAVE SOMETHING— INSIDE OF ME

OF COURSE I'D PROTECT THE MAN I'VE FALLEN FOR!!!

...A

DOUBLE...

HIT...?

BUT I CAN STILL... MOVE MY BODY...
MY HEAD.. IS STILL... WOOZY...

...!?
OW!.. MY JAW...

NGH....
GOOD... SHE'S BREATHING...

WHAT ABOUT THAT OX...?

I DON'T REMEMBER ANYTHING AFTER TALKING TO THAT GUY...

BUT WHY DID I LOSE CONTROL OF MYSELF...?

I WAS ABLE TO REGAIN MY CONSCIOUSNESS BECAUSE SHE HIT ME...

AND MY HEADACHE... WENT AWAY AFTER THAT KISS...

KYOICHI-SA... GIVE 'IM BACK!

UGH... WHY YOU!

I NEED TO GET OUT OF THIS CITY BEFORE I HURT SOMEONE...

IF I'M GOING TO BE UNSTABLE AND LOSE CONTROL, LASHING OUT IN MY HATE...

EVEN WHEN SHE'S KNOCKED OUT, SHE'S THINKING OF HIM...

Sl... SLEEP-TALKING...?

Haaah, that scared me

SHE WAS PROTECTING HIM WITH ALL SHE HAD, AND NOT JUST BECAUSE OF THEIR FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS.

SO THAT'S WHY I KNOW.

WHILE I WAS ON A RAMPAGE, MY CONSCIOUSNESS WAS HAZY, BUT I COULD SEE A LITTLE OF THE BATTLE.

OR COULD SHE HAVE GOTTEN CAUGHT UP IN A CAT TERRITORY WAR!?
OR IF SHE'S FROZEN STIFF BECAUSE SOMEONE'S TRYING TO TALK TO HER?
WHAT IF SHE'S STILL LOST?
Anything's possible!

...OH, JM...

WAIT A SECOND, WHY AM I TALKING TO HER LIKE I'M HER PARENT?

UH...

UM...

NATSUHO...! WHAT WERE YOU DOING OUT SO LATE...?

TELL YOU...

AND... THERE ARE TWO THINGS I WANTED TO...

SO... SORRY...

SO...

I FOUND...

A WAY TO GET BACK HOME...

THIS ISN'T GOING TO GET SOLVED JUST BY ME HATING OR NOT HATING HIM.

SO...

IF I END UP ATTACKING HIM AGAIN,

USHIGURA WOULD END UP FIGHTING ME AGAIN.

I DIDN'T THINK MY HATE WOULD BE THAT UNSTABLE.

I'M JUST GOING TO LIVE DEEP IN THE MOUNTAINS, LIVING IN HATE.

I...

HAVE TO GO BACK.

IF I JUST NEED TO HATE HIM, I DON'T NEED TO SEE HIM TO DO IT.

GOODBYE.

I DON'T NEED TO EVER COME HERE AGAIN.

I SEE...

DO... DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME...

THEN WHEN ARE YOU...

BEFORE THAT... CAN YOU GO TO... THE OX GIRL...?

...? AKAYA...?

I...

WHY AM I... SO SCARED...?

KNOCKED... HER...

OUT...

HUH...? UNCON- SCIOJS...? WHAT HAPPENED...?

SHE'S... UNCONSCIOUS...

.....

HUH...?

WHERE?

TELL ME WHERE SHE IS, NATSUHO...!

UH...

NO, WHY DOES IT MATTER?

BECAUSE I'M GOING TO BE...

I THOUGHT HE'D BE MAD AT ME...

.....

GOT IT. I'M GONNA GO.

BY... BY THE ENTRANCE...

TH... THAT BUILDING OVER THERE...

WHY?

HUH...? WH...

NATSUHO.

STAY INSIDE AND DON'T GO ANYWHERE!

I CAN SEE YOU LEAVING JUST BECAUSE YOU ALREADY SAID GOODBYE.

AND IF YOU JUST LEFT LIKE THAT, I'D BE SAD!

THERE ARE THINGS I WANT TO SAY TO YOU,

...OH, THAT'S THE MANGA HE WAS RECOM-MENDING...

WHY AM I WAITING FOR HIM, JUST LIKE HE TOLD ME TO...?

O...

OKAY...

AM I STILL TAKING AN INTEREST IN HIM...?

I'VE ALREADY SAID MY GOODBYE. IF I DON'T PLAN ON EVER SEEING HIM AGAIN, I CAN JUST LEAVE...

I DON'T HAVE A HEADACHE RIGHT NOW...

BUT I DON'T KNOW WHEN I'LL BECOME LIKE THAT AGAIN...

I'M BACK!

HE SAID HE'D BE SAD IF I LEFT...

YEAH. AYAKA FELL ASLEEP PRETTY QUICKLY.

FELL ASLEEP...? WHAT...?

...?

HJH? WHAT?

N-N-NOTH-ING...

YOU... YOU CAME BACK SO FAST...

Turn the light's on

AND INSISTED ON GUARDING ME EVEN WHEN HER BODY WAS IN SHAMBLES BECAUSE THE HATEFUL CAT WAS AROUND.

WELL, FIRST I TOOK HER TO THE HOSPITAL, BUT SHE WOKE UP,

I CAN COMPLETELY UNDERSTAND THAT.

SO TO PASS THE TIME, I TOLD HER A BIT ABOUT A MANGA THAT I LIKE, AND SHE FELL ASLEEP RIGHT AWAY.

AND THEN THAT GUY GOT OUT AND IT WAS SUPER COOL ALL THE FORESHADOWING UNTIL NOW CAME TOGETHER AT THE SAME TIME AND BOOM! EVEN THAT ONE SCENE ALL THE WAY BACK IN VOLUME ONE WAS PREPARATION FOR THIS, FOR SURE! ...AHH TELL YOU HOW MANY TIMES I READ THAT PART?

Why did that happen?

BUT WHEN I TOLD HER THAT THE HATEFUL CAT RETREATED THANKS TO HER, SHE FINALLY CALMED DOWN...

WELL... I KNOW YOU WOULDN'T JUST ATTACK PEOPLE FOR NO REASON,

BUT IF YOU CAN HELP IT, I'D RATHER YOU NOT FIGHT WITH AKAYA.

I DON'T WANT TO SEE HER GET HURT AND NOT BE HER USUAL SELF.

ふぅ…

I...

I'M SORRY...

HUH...? WHAT WAS THAT THROBBING FEELING...?

ALRIGHT, THAT'S ENOUGH REFLECTING.

YOU'RE HUNGRY, AREN'T YOU?

Was it just a throb of pain?

LET'S START YOUR FAREWELL PARTY.

ISH-

And soy milk hotpot..!?

Cod, salmon, stuffed tofu..!

WHA-

STILL WARY

ANYWAY, IF IT LOOKS SO GOOD TO YOU THAT YOU'RE DROOLING, JUST START EATING ALREADY.

IT'S ALL THE THINGS I LIKE...

ARE... ARE YOU SURE? THIS IS SO EXTRAVAGANT...

And it's even got udon, too.

WELL, SINCE IT'S OUR LAST TIME, I FIGURED WE CAN GO ALL-OUT.

And you told me what your favorites were

IT'SH GOOD.

はぁ、

ほっ

GREAT, GREAT...

I'M GLAD I WAS ABLE TO MAKE HER HAPPY IN THE END...

Seafood is expensive, after all.

かっ

ぽぉぁぁ

HOW RUDE... I CAN'T MESS UP HOTPOT, IT'S JUST THE BASE AND INGREDIENTS.

I think

BUT... I CAN'T BELIEVE IT... YOU MADE SOMETHING EDIBLE...

SORRY YOUR FAREWELL PARTY IS JUST THE TWO OF US.

Cool

ONE OR THE OTHER... MAYBE I SHOULD LEARN HOW TO COOK...

OR JUST TURN AWAY,

NO MATTER WHAT I MADE, SHE'D EITHER FAINT IN AGONY

What should I eat next?

What should I eat next?

I feel so defeated right now

IF WE INVITED THEM, I DOUBT WE'D ABLE TO EAT THIS PEACEFULLY...

BJT KIDS CAN'T STAY UP THIS LATE AT NIGHT...

I WANTED TO GET TAROMARU AND HANA,

WHY WOULD YOU NEVER HAVE ANOTHER FAREWELL PARTY?

MAYBE YOU'D HAVE ONE IF YOU MOVED FROM WHERE YOU LIVE OVER THERE... OR MAYBE FOR YOUR FRIENDS...

SO JUST HAVING ONE RIGHT NOW IS ALREADY...

I'LL NEVER HAVE ANOTHER FAREWELL PARTY EVER AGAIN...

IS FINE...

JU... JUST THE TWO OF US...

I WON'T.

...NO,

OR MAYBE AN ACQUAIN-TANCE...

NO ONE WOULD ASSOCIATE WITH ME...

ESPECIALLY FOR A YOKAI LIKE THE HATEFUL CAT THAT LASHES OUT IN HATRED...

WHERE I LIVE... YOKAI AND HUMANS DON'T GET ALONG LIKE THEY DO IN THIS CITY...

BUT IN THE END, I LASHED OUT IN HATRED... AND THEY NEVER APPROACHED ME AGAIN.

THERE WERE SOME KIDS WHO DID...

THAT'S WHY I DON'T TAKE AN INTEREST... AND DON'T INTERACT WITH OTHERS...

OVER THERE, I DON'T HAVE FRIENDS...

I DON'T EVEN HAVE ANY ACQJAIN-TANCES...

WHY DON'T YOU TRANSFER TO A SCHOOL HERE?

...THEN,

I GUESS IT WOULDN'T BE THAT EASY...

OH... BUT THEN...

If they ever found out about you hmm

THEN IT'LL BE BETTER FOR YOU THAN IF YOU WERE TO...

YOU'RE A THIRD-YEAR IN MIDDLE SCHOOL, RIGHT? ONCE APRIL COMES AROUND, WE CAN GO TO THE SAME HIGH SCHOOL,

...YEAH.

IT'S COLD OUT, SO YOU HAVE TO DRESS WARM!

WHAT IS HE, MY MOTHER...?

Suffocating, literally and figuratively.

Maybe this'll be warmer!

DID YOU GET EVERYTHING?

ARE YOU SURE YOU DIDN'T FORGET ANYTHING?

UH... UM,

I SHOULD AT LEAST... SAY SOME-THING...

THIS IS OUR LAST TIME...

?

UM...

UH...

ズキ...

UH... UM...

UM...

HM? DID YOU SAY SOME-THING...?

HUH... WHAT? WHAT IS THIS FEELING...?

Is there something underneath the towel?

I'm getting a huge sense of deja-vu

IS THAT THING HANGING THERE YOURS?

OH, COME TO THINK OF IT,

THAT'S MY CHANGE OF...!!

UNDERW-!!

I FEEL LIKE THIS HAPPENED BEFORE...

HM...

WHOA!? WHAT? WHAT!?

I... I'LL GET...!

だだだだだだ

ST- STO...

WA- WAAAH!

ひゃあ

NATSUHO...?

ACTUALLY, TAKE OFF YOUR SHOES FIRST...

UM, JUUH, NATSUHO...

PLEASE DON'T FREEZE UP WHILE YOU'RE ON TOP OF ME...

I'm getting a huge sense of de_a-vu

I'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO SAY IT.

IF I RUN AWAY NOW,

IF I DON'T GATHER MY COURAGE NOW, I'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO SAY IT.

MY HEADACHE IS COMING BACK...

.....

YOU LET ME USE YOUR BATH... AND LET ME STAY HERE...

EVEN IF I'M SOMEONE WHO CAN'T EVEN MAINTAIN EYE CONTACT,

AND GAVE ME A FAREWELL PARTY...

AND COOKED ME FOOD...

AND I'M SHY AND I RUN AWAY FROM EVERYTHING,

HELPED... ME OUT SO MANY TIMES...

YOU...

I WANT TO AT LEAST BE ABLE TO TELL HIM HOW I FEEL.

YOU REACHED OUT TO ME.

EVEN THOUGH... I'M THE HATEFUL CAT...

THANK YOU...

FOR LETTING ME HATE YOU...

B... BYE.

.....

NATSUHO...

COME VISIT SOMETIME!

キィ…

PFT—

Hi——

You must be the head of the Nekun!

!?

WHEN WE FIRST MET, SHE CAME FROM ABOVE, TOO...

HAHA... COME TO THINK OF IT...

PFT... HAHA, WHO LEAVES FROM THERE...?

I WONDER WHEN SHE'LL COME BACK...

SIGH...

I HATE THAT GUY...

HE STOLE MY FIRST KISS... I'LL HATE HIM FOREVER...

ALL I CAN DO IS HATE HIM...

WHENEVER I'M WITH HIM...

...?

JUST...

THINKING ABOUT HIM... MAKES ME HATE HIM... AND...

WHEN I THINK... THAT I'LL... NEVER HAVE TO SEE...

HIM... AGAIN...

HUH...?
ポロ…

WHY—

WHAT...?

WHEN...? WHEN DID I...

WHA... UGH...

WHAT?

THEN I NEED TO LEAVE THIS TOWN BEFORE I LASH OUT IN HATE AGAINST SOMEONE...

THINKING THAT IF I'M GOING TO GO ON A RAMPAGE, BECAUSE I'M UNSTABLE,

ズキン…

UUH...

WANTING TO LEAVE TO AVOID LASHING OUT AT SOMEONE IN HATE BECAUSE I'M UNSTABLE IS JUST A FRONT.

AH...

UUUNGH...

ズキン…

WHY AM I... SO SCARED...?

THAT I DON'T WANT TO DRAG THE OX INTO SOMETHING JUST BETWEEN THE TWO OF US, IS JUST AN EXCUSE.

I WAS JUST AFRAID OF BEING HATED BY SOMEONE WHO'D INTERACT WITH ME EVEN THOUGH I'M THE HATEFUL CAT BY HURTING SOMEONE PRECIOUS TO HIM.

AM I MISSING HER MORE THAN I THOUGHT I WOULD...?

HMM... WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME?

STOP! STOP!

HEY!

WHOA!

YOU'RE TECHNICALLY THE HEAD OF THE NEKUNI FAMILY...

SO YOU SHOULD SET AN EXAMPLE BY GREETING PEOPLE BY RAISING YOUR HAND.

Affirmatively like this

ARE YOU SLEEP-WALKING, NEKUNI-SENPAI!?

THE LIGHT IS RED, DEFINITELY RED!

OH, HEY SANA.

OH YEAH... IT REALLY IS RED.

THAT OLD SAYING ABOUT DOGS AND MONKEYS NOT GETTING ALONG DESCRIBES YOU TWO TO THE LETTER, DOESN'T IT.

JUST THINKING ABOUT HER IS GOING TO GIVE ME THE STUPID GERMS...!

PLE... PLEASE DON'T LUMP ME TOGETHER WITH THAT STUPID PERVERTED FREAK OF NATURE MONKEY!

YOU'RE NOT TOGETHER WITH CHIE TODAY?

WHAT!?

I WAS LOST IN THOUGHT... THANKS FOR SAVING ME. COME TO THINK OF IT, I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU IN A WHILE.

...HUH?

THAT TIME WHEN THERE WAS THAT INCIDENT WITH THE CAT, I....

UM...

ALRIGHT, JUST SAY IT...!

I WANTED TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT SOMETHING, NEKUNI-SENPAI.

ABOUT WHAT?

A-ANYWAY, ENOUGH ABOUT THAT...

GOOD MOOR-NIN'!!

?

THE SMELL OF THE HATEFUL CAT ON SENPAI IS... GONE...?

I, AKAYA USHI-GURA,

HAVE HUMBLY RECOVERED FROM MY INJURIES!!

WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING!!?

DON'T "RECOVERED ☆" ME!!!

WAH!

GO HOME! GO HOME AND REST!

A NORMAL PERSON WOULDN'T MOVE AROUND RIGHT AFTER RECOVERING FROM INJURIES LIKE THOSE!!

BUT I RECOVERED ALREADY..

UH, UUUH...

OH... ALRIGHT.

She's such a diligent girl

I WANT TO GET TO SCHOOL AND REVIEW.

Bye, Sana-chan!

I DON'T REALLY HAVE A REASON TO TALK TO YOU ANYMORE, SO I'LL BE LEAVING NOW.

UH, NO... IT'S ALRIGHT.

WHAT DID YOU WANT TO TALK TO ME ABOUT?

OH, SORRY!

THERE'S NO NEED FOR ME TO DO ANYTHING OUT OF THE ORDINARY...

IF THE CAT ISN'T AROUND ANYMORE,

...WELL,

BUT WHAT'S IN THE BAG?

ALRIGHT, I'LL LET YOU GOING TO SCHOOL SLIDE FOR NOW...

AFTER HAVING MY HEART RAVAGED BY DEALING WITH A VIOLENT, GIGANTIC CAT, NOTHING WOULD BE BETTER THAN TO HAVE THAT LITTLE KITTY SOOTHE MY...

YEAH, I LIKE ITTY-BITTY CATS WAY MORE THAN HUGE CATS!

UM... AYAKA... YOU SEE...

IT WAS EXPENSIVE, BUT IF THAT'S WHAT IT'LL TAKE FOR HER TO LIKE ME, IT'S NOTHIN'!!

!!!

FUFUFU, THIS IS FOR THE LITTLE KITTY!!

THAT'S GREAT... YEAH... GREAT... GREAT...

THIS ISN'T GOOD, SHE'S REALLY BEEN HIT HARD...

She's like a broken robot

I... I SEE, YOU FOUND HER OWNER...

GREAT...

GREAT...

GREAT...

!!

SO MAYBE IF SHE RUNS AWAY AGAIN, WE MIGHT SEE HER AGAIN...?

SHE DIDN'T LIKE HER OWNER MUCH...

BUT... IT FELT LIKE

.....

I'LL HELP OUT, TOO...! I'LL TALK TO THE OWNER ABOUT IT...!

WHAT, ADOPT...?

...! IF THAT HAPPENS, LET'S ADOPT HER, KYOICHI-SAN...!

IT'S BETTER TO BE SOMEWHERE YOU WANT TO BE

THAN TO BE SOMEWHERE YOU DON'T, RIGHT?

I'M SURE THEY CAN BECOME GOOD FRIENDS.

MAYBE I CAN TALK TO AKAYA ABOUT HER.

IF NATSUHO COMES BACK AFTER EVERYTHING'S CALMED DOWN,

...YEAH.

THAT'S WEIRD... I THOUGHT I TOOK IT HOME, BUT IT WASN'T THERE...
I had to use cash this morning!
HOW DID I LEAVE MY BUS PASS HERE...?
...I CAN'T BELIEVE IT.

I'LL JUST GET IT AND GET OUTTA HERE.

I don't want to see his face, no matter what
WELL, I GUESS THAT'S WHY THERE'S A SECRET PASSAGE, FOR TIMES LIKE THIS.

I WAS HOPING I WOULDN'T HAVE TO SEE HIS FACE FOR A WHILE, BUT...

THE WIND FEELS STRONG TODAY...

OH... SINCE I'M HERE, I SHOULD STOP BY AND SEE MY LITTLE SISTER...

SHE WAS DEFINITELY ASLEEP YESTERDAY...

Heloooo

IF I DON'T, SHE'LL GET MAD AT ME...

...WHAT?

.....?

WHA...

WHAT'S... GOING...

ON...?

WHY...?

I THOUGHT...

I THOUGHT YOU WENT HOME...?

WHY... ARE...

THIS...?

WHAT... IS...

NATSUHO...?